

PSYC21: Adulthood and Aging

University of Toronto, Scarborough (Winter 2025)

IA 2021, Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm

Course Description: This course is an examination of human development from the end of adolescence (ages 18-25) through the end of life. The course will explore cognitive, emotional, social, linguistic, perceptual, and motor development throughout adulthood, and will also investigate age-related psychological disorders. Topics that will be explored include: marriage and divorce, child-rearing, careers, memory development, changes in friend groups, and many more.

Learning Outcomes:

By the conclusion of this course, you should...

- ...have a **deep understanding** of the various psychological processes and phenomena that occur after the end of adolescence through the end of life.
- ...be able to **articulate** the major questions in the field of adult development and **be familiar with** the methods used to test those questions.
- ...have **experience** conducting a structured interview with an older adult and writing up the results of that interview, drawing upon empirical research findings in the field
- ...be able to **apply** findings from within the field of psychological science to everyday life, including to phenomena described in the popular media

Prerequisites: PSYB20H3 and [PSYB07H3 or STAB22H3 or STAB23H3] and PSYB70H3

Exclusions: PSY313H, PSY311H

Recommended Preparation: None

Credit Value: 0.5





Instructor: Kyle Danielson, PhD
k.danielson@utoronto.ca

Office: HW505A

Office Hours: **By appointment, on Zoom**, at:
<https://calendly.com/kdanielson>

If no listed times work for you, feel free to email for a separate appointment.

Dr. Kyle Danielson is an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream in the Department of Psychology, where he teaches undergraduate courses in developmental psychology across the lifespan, as well as PSYA02 and PSYD98. His primary research interests are in language acquisition and maintenance across the lifespan, particularly amongst bilingual children.

 <p>TA for surnames A-Mar: Danielle Downie danielle.downie@mail.utoronto.ca</p> <p>Office Hours: Please send an email to make an appointment</p>	<p>Danielle is a first-year PhD student in Clinical Psychology. Her research interests include treatment for substance use disorder with a focus on engagement in online treatment options.</p>
 <p>TA for Surnames Mat-Z: Mikayla Samuel mikayla.samuel@mail.utoronto.ca</p> <p>Office Hours: Please send an email to make an appointment</p>	<p>Mikayla is a third-year PhD student in Experimental Psychology. She previously completed her HBSc in Psychology & Health Studies at UTSC. Her research focuses on perceptual-motor integration, more specifically, the influence of rhythmic perception on aspects of motor movement in toddlers and adults.</p>

Contacting the instructor and TAs: We are each very happy to hear from you by email whenever you have a question or concern, or to set up an in-person appointment.

When writing to us, please put “PSYC21” in the subject line of the email to help us get to it faster. We will respond to all emails within two business days (not counting weekends and statutory holidays). Please address emails to **your TA** (by surname) when enquiring about reading material, exam preparation, paper questions, or grades. Please address emails to Kyle for clarification on anything that he presents during lecture, for academic or professional questions, or if you are unable to address your concern with your TA.

Prerequisites and/or Course Restrictions: Enrollment in this course is typically restricted to students in the Specialist and Major programs in Psychology, Mental Health Studies, Paramedicine, and Psycholinguistics. Students in the Minor program in Psychology will be admitted if space permits. The course builds on material learned in PSYB20, a prerequisite for the course. Students are also required to have taken a B-level Psychological Research Methods course and a B-level statistics course.

Course Materials:

Course Readings: Readings for this course will come from assigned articles (all accessible through the UofT Library system) and from the textbook:

Whitbourne, S.K., Whitbourne, S.B., & Konnert, C. (2021). *Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives* (2nd Canadian Edition). Wiley.

The textbook can be purchased or rented through the [UofT Bookstore](#).

Lectures: Lectures and lecture slides form an important part of the course, and lecture material will appear on tests. Lectures will not be recorded.

A note about posting lecture slides online:

We are aware that some students prefer to take notes on printed lecture slides as the lecture progresses, but we have made the determination that posting slides *after* lecture creates a more collaborative learning environment during class. Page numbers will be prominent on lecture slides both during class and when posted on Quercus, to provide you with the opportunity to take notes on individual slides by number.

Course Requirements and Grading: Your mark for PSYC21 will consist of the following:

- Interview, peer reviews, and report (25%)
- Two reading/course reflections (5% each)
- Midterm Test (30%)
- Final Exam (35%)

Interview Questions, Peer Reviews, and Report (25%)

-Questions (5%)

-Peer Reviews (2%)

-Draft completeness (2%)

-Reflection (2%)

-Final report (14%)

For this assignment, you will be interviewing one adult of your choice who is 65 or older. Your interview will revolve around questions that you prepare in advance and that pertain to **one topic** that we have discussed or will discuss in PSYC21. You will then prepare a report of this interview, drawing upon material from the course as well as one or more external journal articles.

Details about the interview and the report will be made available on Quercus in late January. In the meantime, you can begin to think about whom you will interview, but please do not contact them about the interview until you have received further instructions.

The first draft of 10 interview questions is due on Quercus by **11:59pm on Friday, February 7.**

These questions will then be randomly distributed (via Quercus) to two of your peers for their comments. You too will receive two sets of questions to review. You must

provide *constructive, detailed* feedback on your peers' questions by **11:59pm on Friday, February 14**. These peer reviews are for completion marks (1% each).

During or after Reading Week, you will conduct your interview and prepare your report. Prior to submitting your final report, you will need to submit a **draft version** to Studiosity by **Friday, March 14 at 11:59pm**. Studiosity will generate feedback to help improve your writing.

The final draft of your report is due by **Friday, March 21 at 11:59pm**. You will submit your final draft, your Studiosity feedback report (downloaded from Studiosity in .pdf) and a brief reflection statement on the changes that you made to your report based on the Studiosity feedback.

You are encouraged to submit your draft to Studiosity in advance and as many times as you want, but you are required to submit it at least once.

Reading/Course Reflections (5% each)

Twice during the term, you will be asked to write a brief 500-1000 word reflection on **one of the research articles that we read in class** or **one of the lectures**. In this reflection, you should briefly summarize the article and/or the lecture, and this summary should comprise between 15 and 25% of your paper.

For the remaining 75-85% of your work, you should critique and/or reflect on the material. Some of the questions that you might wish to answer in your reflection include, but are not limited to:

- How does the material compare to your own lived experience with the topic? Here you might draw on your own developmental processes and those of people in your community.
- What gaps or holes do you think there are in the material? Here you might consider questions such as internal/external validity, ecological validity, reliability, applicability, and the inclusion of data from diverse sources.
- If you were to conduct the research you are reflecting upon, what might you do differently? Or, what future directions do you think that this research might take?

Again, the questions listed here are just some of the options, and there are many directions that you can take these short papers. They are an opportunity for you to practice thinking critically about psychological science data and theory.

You are encouraged, but not required, to submit drafts of your work to Studiosity for feedback before posting the final draft to Quercus.

One reflection is due prior to the midterm exam on **March 5 at 1:00pm**. The other reflection is due on the last day of classes, **April 4 at 11:59pm**. You are, however,

encouraged to finish the work earlier than that so that you can focus on your interview report and on studying for tests.

Midterm Test (30%)

The midterm test will be comprised of all material immediately preceding the test date. The test will be written during class time at **1:00pm on Wednesday, March 5.**

The test will consist of approximately 45 multiple choice questions with five answer choices each. You will have 90 minutes to write the exam.

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam will be similar in format to the midterm test. Most material tested on the final exam will come from the second half of the course, after the midterm. However, there may be some questions related to material from the first half of the course, and you should consider the final exam to be **cumulative**.

The exact date of the final exam will be announced by the Registrar's Office in late February or early March, and can be held anytime during the April examination period. Please be prepared to write the test whenever it is scheduled, including in the evenings and/or on a Saturday.

Course Calendar

- *Required journal article readings can be found through the University Library.*
- *Please read these assignments BEFORE class on the day on which they are listed.*
- *Remember to check Quercus each week for any changes!*

Class Date	Topic	Required Readings and Assignments Due
January 8	Themes & Models in Adult Development	Ch. 1
January 15	Physical Changes and Maintenance	Chs. 2 & 4 Allen et al. (2024)
January 22	Health & Health Disorders	Ch. 5 Rush et al. (2024)
January 29	Basic Cognitive Functions	Ch. 6 Toups et al. (2022)
February 5	Higher-Order Cognitive Functions	Ch. 7 First draft of interview questions due Friday, February 7, 11:59pm
February 12	Writing and Interviewing Skills	No readings Peer reviews of interview questions due Friday, February 14, 11:59pm
February 19	<i>Reading Week</i>	-

February 26	Personality	Ch. 8 Lachman, Teshale, & Agrigoroaei (2015)
March 5	<i>Midterm Test</i>	The midterm test is comprised of material from January and February Reflection 1 due Wednesday, March 5, 1:00pm
March 12	Social Relationships	Ch. 9 McConnell et al. (2011) Interview draft and Studiosity output due Friday, March 14, 11:59pm
March 19	Work, Retirement, and Leisure	Ch. 10 An, Payne, & Liechty (2023) Interview final and reflection due Friday, March 21, 11:59pm
March 26	Mental Health Issues and Treatment	Ch. 11 Marchant et al. (2021)
April 2	Death & Dying	Ch. 13 Reflection 2 due Friday, April 4, 11:59pm
To be announced in late February	<i>Final Exam</i>	The final exam is comprised of material from March and April

Reading List (in order of assignment)

All readings are available through the University of Toronto Library (<http://library.utoronto.ca>) or by following the links below.

Allen, J. O., Moïse, V., Solway, E., Cheney, M. K., Larson, D. J., Malani, P. N., Singer, D., & Kullgren, J. T. (2024). How old do I look? Aging appearance and experiences of aging among U.S. adults ages 50–80. *Psychology and Aging*, 39(5), 551–564.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000800>
https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_proquest_journals_3092402989

Rush, J., Charles, S. T., Willroth, E. C., Cerino, E. S., Piazza, J. R., & Almeida, D. M. (2024). Changes in daily stress reactivity and changes in physical health across 18 years of adulthood. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaae086>
https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_3149756577

Toups, R., Chirles, T. J., Ehsani, J. P., Michael, J. P., Bernstein, J. P. K., Calamia, M., Parsons, T. D., Carr, D. B., Keller, J. N., & Albert, S. M. (2022). Driving performance in older adults: Current measures, findings, and implications for roadway safety. *Innovation in Aging*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igab051>

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1093_geroni_igab051

Lachman, M. E., Teshale, S., & Agrigoroaei, S. (2015). Midlife as a pivotal period in the life course: Balancing growth and decline at the crossroads of youth and old age.

International Journal of Behavioral Development, 39(1), 20–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025414533223>

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi PubMed_primary_25580043

McConnell, A. R., Brown, C. M., Shoda, T. M., Stayton, L. E., Martin, C. E., & Simpson, J. (2011). Friends With Benefits: On the positive consequences of pet ownership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(6), 1239–1252.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024506>

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_905871338

An, J., Payne, L., & Liechty, T. (2023). Exploring the role and meaning of leisure in healthy aging among older adults with chronic conditions. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 26(5), 682–700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2022.2029511>

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_webofscience_primary_000750963700001CitationCount

Marchant, N. L., Barnhofer, T., Coueron, R., Wirth, M., Lutz, A., Arenaza-Urquijo, E. M., Collette, F., Poisnel, G., Demnitz-King, H., Schild, A.-K., Coll-Padros, N., Delphin-Combe, F., Whitfield, T., Schlosser, M., Gonneaud, J., Asselineau, J., Walker, Z., Krolak-Salmon, P., Molinuevo, J. L., ... Klimecki, O. M. (2021). Effects of a mindfulness-based intervention versus health self-management on subclinical anxiety in older adults with subjective cognitive decline: The SCD-Well Randomized Superiority Trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 90(5), 341–350. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000515669>
https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_scopus_primary_2_s2_0_85104724885

Rababa, M., Hayajneh, A. A., & Bani-Iss, W. (2021). Association of Death Anxiety with Spiritual Well-Being and Religious Coping in Older Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 60(1), 50–64.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01129-x>

https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/fedca1/cdi_springer_journals_10_1007_s10943_020_01129_x

COURSE POLICIES

Please read this section in its entirety and very carefully. There are no exceptions to these policies.

Your Own Email

It is essential that you check your University of Toronto email and course announcements on a **daily basis** while enrolled in this course. All correspondence will be sent to that email address, including announcements posted on Quercus (provided you have this feature turned on in Quercus.) Failure to check your email **will not** be considered a valid excuse for missing deadlines or time-sensitive information in this course. Again, make sure that it is your *official* U of T email address that you are checking!

Missed Term Work

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedure outlined below.

Procedure:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) ("MTW Form").
2. Email **BOTH** your MTW Form and Supporting Documentation to k.danielson@utoronto.ca according to the instructions specified below.

Supporting Documentation Requirements and Deadlines:

Reason for Missed Work	Documentation required for a <i>first absence in the term</i>	Documentation required for <i>subsequent absences in the term</i>	Deadline for submitting MTW form and supporting documentation
Illness or Injury	ACORN Absence Declaration	UofT Verification of Illness Form	<u>within 2 business days</u> of the missed work
Bereavement	ACORN Absence Declaration	A death certificate or funeral announcement	<u>within 2 business days</u> of the missed work
University-sponsored athletic or artistic obligation at the varsity/provincial/national level	ACORN Absence Declaration	A note from a university staff member (advisor, coach, residence staff, etc.) who can substantiate the obligation, sent directly to the course email	<u>10 business days IN ADVANCE</u> of the missed deadline
Disability-related reasons for students registered with AccessAbility Services	For missed <i>TERM TESTS</i> , - Contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed. For missed <i>ASSIGNMENTS</i> , - If your desired accommodation is within the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 3 days), send your Accommodation Letter to the course email and		<u>PREFERABLY IN ADVANCE of the missed work, or as soon as possible</u>

	specify how many days extension you are requesting. - If your desired accommodation is outside the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that), contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed.	
Academic Conflict (e.g. two midterms at the same time)	Screenshot from Quercus demonstrating the conflict.	<u>10 business days IN ADVANCE</u> of the missed work
Religious Conflict	None required	

Notes:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: social activities, recreational travel, technological issues, avoidance of assessments or deadlines, work commitments
- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar’s Office and should be declared on eService.
- For ACORN absence declarations, the date you declare the absence is required to fall within the seven-day declaration period (i.e.) the absence cannot be submitted proactively or retroactively.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar’s Office [petition process](#).
- If you are unable to submit your request within the specified number of business days, you must still email your instructor within that window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the deadlines are made only under exceptional circumstances.
- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered academic conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered academic conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.
- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

Next Steps:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor’s response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you’re able, and email it to your instructor.

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation.** Examples: If you were granted an extension for a paper but are still unable to meet the new deadline, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* MTW form and supply documentation according to the “subsequent absences” column in the chart above. *Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

Other Important Notes

Quercus

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for PSYC21. You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the PSYC21 link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column.

Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

Students may use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, in this course as learning aids or to help produce assignments. However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit.

Students may not use artificial intelligence tools for taking tests, writing research papers (except where noted in the syllabus), creating computer code, or completing major course assignments. However, these tools may be useful when gathering information from across sources and assimilating it for understanding.

The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Recording of Classroom Material by Students

Recording or photographing any aspect of a university course - lecture, tutorial, seminar, lab, studio, practice session, field trip etc. – without prior approval of all involved and with written approval from the instructor is not permitted.

Department of Psychology position on Grade Norms

The Department of Psychology at UTSC is committed to providing fair, consistent, and uniform delivery of its courses from year to year. As part of this commitment, the Department mandates that all C-level courses' final course averages fall between 70 and 74%. That ensures that the courses are not graded harshly in one term and leniently in another term. The course instructor reserves the right to modify marks across the board (for all students) to conform to these averages.

Grade Changes

Under **no circumstances** will the instructor of this course change a grade for an assignment, an exam, or for the course mark. There is **no circumstance** (e.g., a health issue, death in the family, impending graduation prevented by failing this course) that will result in a grade change. The **only changes** made to the course marks will be the ones provided to everyone, as detailed above in the section on Grade Norms. That is the only method that ensures fairness for everyone. **Again, there are no exceptions here.** You may, as always, petition the Registrar's Office if you believe that your mark has been calculated incorrectly.

Academic Integrity

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.utsc@utoronto.ca for more information.

The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Religious Accommodations

The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent

from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.