Psychology 117: Lifespan Development
Tuesday & Thursday, 8:00 – 9:50, WH 216

CONTACT INFORMATION
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Office Hours
Winter Hall 332
Tuesday 10:00–12:00 & Thursday 1:00-2:00,
And by appointment

REQUIRED RESOURCES

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES
The major objective of this course is to increase your understanding of human development from a scientific and psychological perspective. Throughout this course you will be expected to:

1. Describe normative behavior of individuals in terms of physical, biosocial, cognitive, & social-emotional development.

   Assessment: Exams

   Relevant to Program Learning Outcome: Knowledge Base
   Our students will be able to articulate both (a) the structure of the academic discipline of psychology and (b) the key elements of content within a wide variety of areas within psychology, integrating them with each other. Students will also be familiar with career/vocation options in psychology and psychology-related fields.

   Relevant to Institutional Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking
   Demonstrate ability to recognize good vs. bad experimental designs, theories, and arguments in psychology, and also reasoning linking psychology to other disciplines.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of theories that constitute the field of human development & how these theories guide both research and ‘best practices’ when working with people.

   Assessment: Exams, Research Presentation

   Relevant to Program Learning Outcome: Knowledge Base, Written and Oral Communication
   Our students will be able to articulate both (a) the structure of the academic discipline of psychology and (b) the key elements of content within a wide variety of areas within psychology,
integrating them with each other. Students will also be familiar with career/vocation options in psychology and psychology-related fields. Our students will be able to write and speak in genres appropriate to the academic discipline of psychology.

**Relevant to Institutional Learning Outcome:** Critical Thinking, Oral Communication, Information Literacy
Demonstrate ability to recognize good vs. bad experimental designs, theories, and arguments in psychology, and also reasoning linking psychology to other disciplines. Orally present research efficiently, creatively, and competently. Effectively use databases and search engines to locate appropriate sources, and filter and focus within those sources to construct a coherent presentation on their selected topic.

3. Synthesize research findings and communicate how these conclusions help inform practitioners (educators, psychologists, parents, etc.) about pressing issues in developmental psychology.

**Assessment:** Research Presentation

**Relevant to Program Learning Outcome:** Knowledge Base, Written and Oral Communication
Our students will be able to articulate both (a) the structure of the academic discipline of psychology and (b) the key elements of content within a wide variety of areas within psychology, integrating them with each other. Students will also be familiar with career/vocation options in psychology and psychology-related fields. Our students will be able to write and speak in genres appropriate to the academic discipline of psychology.

**Relevant to Institutional Learning Outcome:** Critical Thinking, Oral Communication, Information Literacy
Demonstrate ability to recognize good vs. bad experimental designs, theories, and arguments in psychology, and also reasoning linking psychology to other disciplines. Orally present research efficiently, creatively, and competently. Effectively use databases and search engines to locate appropriate sources, and filter and focus within those sources to construct a coherent presentation on their selected topic.

4. Examine your own developmental journey.

**Assessment:** Personal Journey/Erikson Paper

**Relevant to Program Learning Outcome:** Values and Character, Applications
Our students will value, appreciate, and welcome, through understanding and demonstrative action:

- *scientific methods.* Students will see empirical, evidence-based methods as essential and as complementary to other methods of knowing.
- *ethics.* Students will be committed to high ethical standards, including professional, discipline-specific domains and their own personal lives.
- *faith.* Students will be able to articulate the interactions between psychology and faith.
- *openness to experience.* Students will understand the importance and desirability of a diversity of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds (including ethnic, sociocultural, and gender diversity). They will embrace ambiguity, being comfortable without closure or black-and-white answers, and valuing questions as much as answers.

Our students will apply psychological principles, knowledge, and skills to their own lives and to the transformation of their worlds. Domains to which these are applied include:

- *personal* (personal development, relationships, personal experience, etc.)
- *community and societal/global concerns and issues*
• integration with other academic disciplines

**Relevant to Institutional Learning Outcome:** Global Awareness and Diversity
Engage as active global citizens with an awareness of cultural diversity, one’s own culture/s, and the responsibility of self towards others.

5. Effectively utilize the APA format & style of writing in specified assignments.

**Assessment:** Personal Journey/Erikson Paper

**Relevant to Program Learning Outcome:** Written and Oral Communication
Our students will be able to write and speak in genres appropriate to the academic discipline of psychology.

**Relevant to Institutional Learning Outcome:** Written Communication
Write efficiently, creatively, and competently using APA style in both theoretical/review and research report genres.

**COURSE PROJECTS**

1. **Exams**

There are 4 unit exams for this course. Format of exams will be primarily multiple-choice, with some short-answer and essay.

2. **Group Research Presentation**

Each student will actively participate in a group project/presentation during the semester. Your small group will have 30-40 minutes to present and your presentation should include (but is not limited to) an introduction and overview of the topic, various sides of the research, and discussion questions. In your presentation, be sure to relate your topic to multicultural/diversity issues and human development theories and research. Your presentation may include topic relevant activities, a skit, video (no more than 5 minutes in length), class discussion, and/or additional materials to supplement our reading for the week. Creativity and resourcefulness will be rewarded! Please have your topic approved by the instructor at least two weeks prior to your presentation.

Each student will sign up for a presentation under one of the following broad categories (possible approaches are listed only to stimulate thinking; *you are encouraged to present other sub-topics!!*):

**THE EARLY YEARS** (2/14) Possible approaches: Maternal employment, adoption, child care, super babies, maternal substance abuse, cultural differences, media, child consumers.

**CHILDHOOD LOST** (3/2) Possible approaches: Bullies, child/school violence, homicide, abuse and neglect, trauma, death, serious illness, divorce, orphan or foster child, abandonment, single-parent home.

**STORM & STRESS** (3/21) Possible approaches: peer pressure, late school start times, sexualization of girls, risky business, family conflict, resiliency, gender differences, internet relationships, depression.

**THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER** (4/6) Possible approaches: beyond college life, commitment issues, dating, marriage, mental illness, substance use & abuse, defining morality, intimate partner violence.

**MID-LIFE ___?** (4/18) Possible approaches: infertility, income and health, job satisfaction, career changes, mid-life crisis, empty nesters, family bonds, caretaking, divorce.

**THE GOLDEN YEARS** (4/25) Possible approaches: retirement, depression, dementia, the aging brain, elder abuse, nursing homes, vitality and health.

3. **Personal Journey through Erikson’s Stages of Development**

This assignment is a paper consisting of three parts: first, an interview with your parents to gain their perspective of your journey through Erikson’s stages, and second, a personal exploration of that same journey. For each stage that you have traveled, explore how you personally resolved the conflict presented in that stage and how that resolution facilitates future stages. For example, the first stage is trust vs. mistrust. Explore with your parents the events and circumstances of your first year. Examine also your
past and present issues concerning trust and mistrust. Conclude with your own understanding of your resolution to this stage. Remember, having resolved the conflict at one year does not preclude your dealing with that conflict at a later age/stage. Yet, how you deal with trust vs. mistrust currently may be a window into your earlier resolution.

The third part of the paper is to be a critique of Erikson’s stages based on your personal journey. Does his theory adequately explain your behaviors? Did you have any problems relating to his theory? In what way is his theory helpful for developmental psychology? Speak to potential drawbacks as well as to strengths. Like all papers, this is to be in APA format.

**GRADING CRITERION**

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance on the following criteria:

- Written examinations (4@.18 = .72 of total grade)
- Erikson paper (.15)
- Research presentation (.10)
- Class attendance and participation (.03)

Each assignment is scored on a scale of 0 to 100. The final grade can be calculated by multiplying each score by its respective weighting factor from above and summing all of the weighted scores. Course grades will be assigned on the basis of this total score, using cut-point scores of 90, 80, 70 and 60 for grades of A, B, C and D, respectively (+/– grades will be assigned at the professor’s discretion).

**COURSE POLICIES**

*Class attendance and participation* are expected, and you will be responsible for information gained by the readings as well as that supplied by the lecture. You are allowed to miss a total of two unexcused class sessions during the semester. Students accruing more than four absences during the course of the semester may be dropped from the class with an F. You are responsible for making up any work missed by excused or unexcused absences.

*Assignments* are due at the beginning of class. Assignments turned in after this time will incur a 10% per day penalty. Exceptions will be considered if you turn in a written request 1 week prior to the due date.

*Missed exams:* A student who misses an examination without making prior arrangements with me receives a score of 0 for that exam. Make-up exams may be scheduled ahead of time only under extenuating circumstances.

*Academic Integrity:* All students are expected to subscribe to the highest ideals of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will be dealt with as severely as allowed by the college, most likely a grade of F in the course and recommendation of dismissal from the college. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (see below), cheating, and falsification. Please refer to the College’s policy on Academic Integrity: [http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/registrar/academic_policies/academic-dishonesty.html](http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/registrar/academic_policies/academic-dishonesty.html).

*Plagiarism:* Any student found cheating on class projects or exams will receive an F for that particular project with no opportunity to make up the project. Although sometimes unintentional, plagiarism is considered cheating and students should be aware of how to properly acknowledge sources of information in order to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism will not be tolerated at Westmont College. Offering other’s work (or ideas, words, etc.) as your own without proper acknowledgment is not acceptable. Consequences for intentional or unintentional plagiarism are enumerated in the current plagiarism document at: [http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/provost/plagiarism/plagiarism_policy.html](http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/provost/plagiarism/plagiarism_policy.html).

*Digital Etiquette:* Electronic devices can be a great help in taking notes for this class. However, if you can’t resist the temptation to check your email, Instagram, surf the web, etc., do not bring your device to class. It is difficult to take good notes while surfing the web and, additionally, electronic devices used for the purposes other than class can be a distraction to the students around you.
**Academic Accommodations:** Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (learning, physical/medical, or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the Office of Disability Services. These accommodations may be necessary to ensure equal access to this course.

Please contact Sheri Noble, Director of Disability Services (310A Voskuyl Library, 565-6186, snoble@westmont.edu) or visit the website for more information: http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/disability

**Take your Professor to Lunch:** One of the things I value most is the opportunity to develop relationships with students. The classroom environment does not always allow for more personalized attention or one-on-one exchanges, but I am always open to getting together for coffee or lunch. You are welcome to take advantage of the *Take Your Professor to Lunch* passes that the Office of Campus Life makes available. I look forward to getting to know each one of you better!
# COURSE SCHEDULE

Please be aware that this syllabus and its contents are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and students are expected to note any changes at that time. *Being absent is not an excuse for being uninformed.*

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