Psychology of Aging

Last Updated: Mon, 01/05/2026

Course prefix: PSYC

Course number: 4260

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
35397

Instructor First Name: HSIAOWEN

Instructor Last Name: LIAO

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course offers an introduction to the processes of adult development and aging, including changes in physical, cognitive, and socioemotional functioning and psychological impacts and behavioral adaptation associated with age-related changes. Challenges and opportunities that longevity and aging may bring will be also discussed. A multi-dimensional approach to learning (e.g., lectures, readings, films & videos, guest lecture series) is adopted to convey information. Varied methods are also used to evaluate learning progress and facilitate knowledge acquisition (e.g., individual/group exercises, quizzes, exams, essay assignments). Students' critical thinking will be broadened in three ways. Specifically, they will be able to (1) evaluate adult development and aging with a life-span developmental perspective, (2) be mindful of stereotypes associated with older people and aging processes, and (3) apply the learned knowledge to prepare for a century-long life.

Course learning outcomes:

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

- Use life-span principles to evaluate issues related to adult development and aging
- Acquire a basic understanding of major theories of aging and ways to study aging
- Be aware of individual differences in the process of aging
- Identify factors that may hinder or enhance the chance of successful aging

Required course materials:

Cavanaugh J. C. (2024). Adult Development and Aging, (9th ed.). Publisher: Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 0357796276; ISBN-13: 978-0357796276

- Note that this course is open to both graduate (PYSC 6060) and undergraduate students (PSYC 4260). Additional materials (e.g., assigned readings) that facilitate an in-depth understanding of aging research will also be discussed during lectures.

Grading policy:

Final grade is a composite of the following course requirements

1. Quizzes 60 points (12%)
2. Exams 210 points (42%)
3. Exercises 110 points (22%)
4. Written Assignments 120 points (24%)

Point values will be used to calculate final grades. If the S/U grading is elected, D is the passing grade for this course.

- 450-500 = A (90% and above)
- 400-449 = B (80 - 89%)
- 350-399 = C (70-79%)
- 300-349 = D (60-69%)
- 299 and lower = F (< 60%)

Attendance policy:

Attendance is expected. The instructor reserves the right to add pop exercises/activities for students who attend classes to earn extra points throughout the semester. If you miss a predetermined in-class exercise and quizzes due to unexcused absence, you should accept the consequence and utilize other opportunities to makeup the points missed (e.g., SONA research participation). No makeup exams are allowed unless official documentation is provided and the communication is complete one month in advance. Please see https://registrar.gatech.edu/info/institute-approved-absence-form-for-students for more information about approved absences.

Any letter for Institute approved absences (e.g., conference presentations, athletic events or competitions, religious absences, and/or health emergencies) should be given to the instructor as soon as possible. If you are requesting an absence due to religious observations, those could be made informally with the instructor or via the request form submitted to the registrar. These religious absences should be requested within the first two weeks of the semester.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which manages the due process, including collecting relevant information from all parties, and if responsibility for a violation is found, identifying the appropriate penalty. All students are assumed to have read the GT Academic Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct and have consented to be bound by it.

- https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code
- https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-conduct

For this class, specific examples of academic misconduct and dishonesty include:

- Plagiarism: the unattributed use of words and/or ideas of another person or generative AI. Examples include, but are not limited to: words written by another person (including yourself for a previous class) or generative AI or lifted from the internet with and without proper citation; ideas taken from another person without proper citation.
- To avoid plagiarism, a simple solution is to always *describe answers in your own words* when writing essay assignments and answering open-ended questions.
- Unauthorized collaboration: working with someone else on graded work (e.g., assignments, exams) without explicit permission from the instructor
- Use of unauthorized aids (including, but not limited to, online ‘homework’ help sites, generative AI) for written assignments.
- Submission of an engagement assignment by a student not in the class session.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or

change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion