

MIDLIFE DEVELOPMENT  
PSY 710 G, FALL 2007  
1:30 – 4:15pm Wednesday Leazar 316

**INSTRUCTOR:** Shevaun D. Neupert, Ph.D.  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This graduate seminar will cover theory and empirical research relevant to well-being during the middle adult years. The beginning of the course will be devoted to discussing various definitions and theories of midlife development. Topics for subsequent weeks will focus on three general indicators of adult well-being: physical health, aspects of psychological well-being, and cognition. The remainder of the course will highlight possible correlates and antecedents of well-being during middle adulthood including: stress, personality, social roles, personal efficacy and control. Students are expected to critically read all of the assigned papers, lead and actively participate in discussions, and write a research proposal on a particular aspect of well-being in midlife.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Readings will be available via the course website on WebVista (<http://vista.ncsu.edu>).

**EVALUATION:**

Reaction papers	Due each week	25%
Leading discussion	Date determined first day of class	20%
Research proposal paper	Due December 11 at noon	40% (includes presentation)
Discussion participation	Throughout semester	15%

Overall course grades will conform to the following as designated by the university: A+ (97-100%), A (93-96%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (anything below 60%).

*Reaction papers* are brief (approximately 2 pages) weekly assignments that you will write in preparation for each weekly meeting, after you have read the chapters and articles for the upcoming week. These papers will help you integrate the current readings with previous readings, and will also allow you to point out issues which you would like to address in the discussion of the readings. Critical thinking is an important component of the reaction papers. No article or theory is perfect – it will be your job to point out areas which were not considered (which should be), issues with samples or methods, and any other aspect of the reading which you feel is important to critically evaluate. All reaction papers will be due at the **beginning** of the class meeting. Late papers will be accepted with a 10% per day deduction in points.

*Leading a discussion* entails briefly summarizing as well as integrating the articles and proposing at least four points of discussion. Bringing in concepts from other courses or developmental periods is perfectly appropriate, especially if they help draw distinctions between midlife and other periods of development. Each student will lead one class meeting. Selection of who leads a given discussion will be determined during the first class meeting.

The *research proposal paper* will be a 15-20 page paper on a component of well-being relevant to midlife. The major goal of the paper will be to integrate and synthesize your knowledge of the current state of the field based on the readings from this course, and then critically evaluate what important area(s) remains to be explored. To accomplish this, you will write a literature review which focuses on the relevant readings from this course (you may also bring in other sources) and sets the stage for your research proposal of a novel study idea. The remaining portion of the paper will be a description of your proposed study (sample, measures, procedure), with rationales for each decision included. Each student will give a brief (15-20 minute) presentation on his or her research proposal which will take place during the last two class meetings. A more detailed description of the requirements will be distributed later.

*Discussion participation* includes: (a) being in class every week; (b) being well-prepared by having carefully read all the assigned readings; and (c) contributing actively to critical discussions in class about the readings.

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

In the event of an excused absence that is accepted by the instructor (see REG02.20.3 for definitions of an excused absence), the student will have one week after returning to class to make up the missed work. Such make-up work shall be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original assignment.

#### INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has: (1) completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, (2) been unable to complete course requirements prior to the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and (3) obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade.

#### ACCOMODATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. Please register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1).

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students will adhere to the University's Code of Student Conduct ([http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student\\_services/student\\_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm](http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm)). Consistent with the provisions of this Code, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, and aiding and abetting others to cheat or plagiarize. It is understood that the student's signature on any exam or assignment means that the student neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. Students who are accused of violations of the Code will be referred to the Coordinator, Office of Student Conduct.

#### COURSE EVALUATION:

Online course evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last two weeks of class (November 26-December 9). Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential; instructors will never know how any one student responded to any question, and students will never know the ratings for any particular instructors.

## Schedule of Readings/Topics

*Note: Schedule subject to change/update*

### **August 22, Course Overview and Introduction to the Study of Middle Adulthood**

Lachman, M.E., & James, J.B. (1997). Charting the course of midlife development: An overview. In M.E. Lachman, & J.B. James (Eds.), *Multiple paths of midlife development* (pp. 1-17). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **August 29, Demography and Life Span Theories of Middle Adulthood**

Eggebeen, D.J., & Sturgeon, S. (2006). Demography of the baby boomers. In S.K. Whitbourne, & S.L. Willis (Eds.), *The baby boomers grow up: Contemporary perspectives on midlife* (pp. 3-21). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lachman, M.E. (2004). Development in midlife. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 305-331.

Moen, P., & Wethington, E. (1999). Midlife development as a life-course context. In S.L. Willis, & R. Reid (Eds.), *Life in the middle: Psychological and social development in middle age* (pp. 2-23). San Diego: Academic Press.

### **September 5, Physical Health: Basic Concepts**

Merrill, S.S., & Verbrugge, L.M. (1999). Health and disease in midlife. In S.L. Willis, & R. Reid (Eds.), *Life in the middle: Psychological and social development in middle age* (pp. 77-103). San Diego: Academic Press.

Whitbourne, S.K. (2001). The physical aging process in midlife: Interaction with psychological and sociocultural processes. In M.E. Lachman (Ed.), *Handbook of midlife development* (pp. 109-155). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Levkoff, S.E., Cleary, P.D., & Wetle, T. (1987). Differences in the appraisal of health between aged and middle-aged adults. *Journal of Gerontology*, 42, 114-120.

### **September 12, Physical Health: SES and Culture (continued on next page)**

\*Brim, O.G., Ryff, C.D., & Kessler, R.C. (2004). The MIDUS national survey: An overview. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 1-34). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\*Note: This chapter provides an overview of the MIDUS study; it is recommended that you read this first.

Marmot, M.G., & Fuher, R. (2004). Socioeconomic position and health across midlife. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 64-89). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ryff, C.D., Singer, B.H., & Palmersheim, K.A. (2004). Social inequalities in health and well-being: The role of relational and religious protective factors. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 90-123). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Barger, S.D. (2006). Do psychological characteristics explain socioeconomic stratification of self-rated health? *Journal of Health Psychology, 11*, 21-35.

Angel, J.L., Buckley, C.J., & Sakamoto, A. (2001). Duration or disadvantage? Exploring nativity, ethnicity, and health in midlife. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 56B*, S275-S284.

### **September 19, Physical Health: MIDUS Findings on Sex Differences**

Cleary, P.D., Zaborski, L., & Ayanian, J.Z. (2004). Sex differences in health over the course of midlife. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 37-63). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rossi, A.S. (2004). The menopausal transition and aging processes. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 153-201). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carr, D., & Friedman, M. (2005). Is obesity stigmatizing? Body weight, perceived discrimination and psychological well-being in the United States. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 46*, 244-259.

### **September 26, Emotional Well-Being**

Mroczek, D.K. (2004). Positive and negative affect at midlife. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 205-226). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mroczek, D.K. (2001). Age and emotion in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10*, 87-90.

Carstensen, L.L., Isaacowitz, D.M., & Charles, S.T. (1999). Taking time seriously: A theory of socioemotional selectivity. *American Psychologist, 54*, 165-181.

Carstensen, L.L., Fung, H.H., & Charles, S.T. (2003). Socioemotional selectivity theory and the regulation of emotion in the second half of life. *Motivation and Emotion, 27*, 103-123.

### **October 3, Psychological Well-Being (continued on next page)**

Ryff, C.D. (1995). Psychological well-being in adult life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 5*, 99-104.

Ryff, C.D., Keyes, C.L.M., & Hughes, D.L. (2004). Psychological well-being in MIDUS: Profiles of ethnic/racial diversity and life course uniformity. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 398-422). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Markus, H.R., Plaut, V., & Lachman, M.E. (2004). Well-being in America: Core features and regional patterns. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 614-650). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ryff, C.D., Keyes, C.L.M., & Hughes, D.L. (2003). Status inequalities, perceived discrimination, and eudaimonic well-being: Do the challenges of minority life hone purpose and growth? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 44, 275-291.

#### **October 10, Cognition**

Dixon, R.A., de Frias, C.M., & Maitland, S.B. (2001). Memory in midlife. In M.E. Lachman (Ed.), *Handbook of midlife development* (pp. 248-278). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Willis, S.L., & Schaie, K.W. (2006). Cognitive functioning in the baby boomers: Longitudinal and cohort effects. In S.K. Whitbourne, & S.L. Willis (Eds.), *The baby boomers grow up: Contemporary perspectives on midlife* (pp. 205-234). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Richards, M., Hardy, R., & Wadsworth, M.E.J. (2003). Does active leisure protect cognition? Evidence from a national birth cohort. *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 785-792.

Mitchell, E.S., & Woods, N.F. (2001). Midlife women's attributions about perceived memory changes: Observations from the Seattle Midlife Women's Health Study. *Journal of Women's Health and Gender-Based Medicine*, 10, 351-362.

#### **October 17, Social Responsibility**

Rossi, A.S. (2004). Social responsibility to family and community. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 550-585). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McAdams, D.P. (2001). Generativity in midlife. In M.E. Lachman (Ed.), *Handbook of midlife development* (pp. 395-443). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Almeida, D.M., McDonald, D.A., Havens, J., & Schervish, P. (2001). Temporal patterns in social responsibility. In A. Rossi (Ed.), *Caring and doing for others: Social responsibility in the domains of family, work, and community* (pp. 135-156). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

#### **October 24, Stress**

Aldwin, C.M., & Levenson, M.R. (2001). Stress, coping, and health at midlife: A developmental perspective. In M.E. Lachman (Ed.), *Handbook of midlife development* (pp. 188-214). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Almeida, D.M., & Horn, M.C. (2004). Is daily life more stressful during middle adulthood? In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 425-451). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Charles, S.T., & Almeida, D.M. (2007). Genetic and environmental effects of daily life stressors: More evidence for greater variation in later life. *Psychology and Aging*, 22, 331-340.

Serido, J., Almeida, D.M., & Wethington, E. (2004). Chronic stressors and daily hassles: Unique and interactive relationships with psychological distress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 45, 17-33.

### **October 31, Social Roles: Family**

Marks, N.F., Bumpass, L.L., & Hey, J.J. (2004). Family roles and well-being during the middle life course. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 514-549). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Greenfield, E.A., & Marks, N.F. (2006). Linked lives: Adult children's problems and their parents' psychological and relational well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 442-454.

Marks, N.F. (1998). Does it hurt to care? Caregiving, work-family conflict, and midlife well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 951-966.

Byrne, A., & Carr, D.S. (2005). Caught in the cultural lag: The stigma of singlehood. *Psychological Inquiry*, 16, 84-91.

### **November 7, Social Roles: Work and Role Conflict**

Carr, D.S. (2004). Psychological well-being across three cohorts: A response to shifting work-family opportunities and expectations? In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 452-484). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shaw, B.A., Krause, N., Chatters, L.M., Connell, C.M., & Ingersoll-Dayton, B. (2004). Emotional support from parents in early life, aging, and health. *Psychology and Aging*, 19, 4-12.

Grzywacz, J.G., Almeida, D.M., & McDonald, D.A. (2002). Work-family spillover and daily reports of work and family stress in the adult labor force. *Family Relations*, 51, 28-36.

Coleman, L.M., & Antonucci, T.C. (1983). Impact of work on women at midlife. *Developmental Psychology*, 19, 290-294.

### **November 14, Personal Control and Personality**

Lachman, M.E., & Prenda, K.M. (2004). The adaptive value of feeling in control during midlife. In O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, & R.C. Kessler (Eds.), *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife* (pp. 320-349). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Miller, L.M.S., & Lachman, M.E. (2000). Cognitive performance and the role of control beliefs in midlife. *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition*, 7, 69-85.

Mroczek, D.K., Spiro, A. III., & Griffin, P.W. (2006). Personality and aging. In J.E. Birren, & K.W. Schaie (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of aging* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 363-377). San Diego: Elsevier.

Neupert, S.D., Almeida, D.M., & Charles, S.T. (2007). Age differences in reactivity to daily stressors: The role of personal control. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 62B, P216-P225.

### **November 21: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK**

### **November 28, Presentations**

### **December 5, Presentations and wrapping up**

### **December 11, Research proposal paper due at noon**