PSY 598 0lW Psychology of Gerontology
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026; Online- Web-Based
1/12/2026 through 05/10/2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Michael W. Smart, Ph.D., MBA - Professor
Office Location: Virtual
Office Hours: by appointment
University Email Address: Michael.Smart@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: Email
Communication Response Time: 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays, in which case communication will occur the next business day. Dr. Smart normally responds rapidly. If you haven't heard back within a few hours, feel free to resend your email.

IMPORTANT COURSE FORMAT:

Your course is delivered fully online, utilizing the D2L instructional system, which is available to you through Texas A&M University-Commerce. There are no on-campus meetings of this class. Content delivery will be completely online and asynchronous. You will be expected to work through the course modules that will be posted on D2L. If you experience problems accessing the system, please contact the system administrator at once through the help screens provided. The content in this course builds on itself; therefore, it is critical that you work through the course in a sequential way and stay current on deadlines.

All of the course assignments are in D2L with any supplemental course materials. The required textbooks are your primary source of information.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

Erin L. Woodhead and Brian P. Yochim, Editors. (2nd Ed. 2024) *Psychology of Aging: A Biopsychosocial Perspective.* Springer Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0826166166

 ***Additional required readings will be provided on Desire2Learn

Other resources. Texas A&M University-Commerce's Gee Library provides access to thousands of online journals. Of particular interest to this class are resources found in the ERIC

and PsychInfo databases. You may access these resources on campus or from home by using your CWID and password at http://www.tamuc.edu/library

Course Description:

Description from the Graduate Course Catalog: "This course will cover topics in gerontology including physical and mental changes in older adults, transitions such as retirement, mental health issues for the older adult, and health issues. The course will provide needed information to help the older adult adjust to changes in life. The course will focus on positive sides of aging which are often neglected."

Student Learning Outcomes:

The student will demonstrate an understanding of:
- the importance of the psychology of aging
- mental health and aging
- cultural differences in aging
- current mental health concerns in aging

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed:

Students are to use word processing programs to complete the course successfully.

Instructional Methods:

A variety of teaching strategies will be used in this class, including lecture, discussion, and review of media in various formats. For students to benefit from these teaching strategies, it is critical that they keep pace with readings assigned in class. Additionally, students will take part in role-plays demonstrating the application of cognitive-behavioral interventions. Students will note that some of the material presented in class will be consistent with their readings in their text. Other information will not be found in the text but provided from resources used by the instructor.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course:

To be successful in this course, log into the course on D2L regularly and follow the course modules. Other recommendations to help be successful in this course include: (a) getting the contact information of one of your classmates (in the event you missed a class or just need clarification), (b) contacting a librarian at TAMUC (you can do this over the phone), and (c) e-mailing Dr. Smart with any questions.

GRADING SCALE and ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are assigned based on this overall scale:

A= 90%-100%
B = 80%-89.9%
C = 70%-79.9%
D = 60%-69.9%
F = 59.9% or Below

Assignment 1: Short Papers (There are five individual short papers.)
50% of total grade, 10% each)

During the assigned weeks, each student will be responsible for writing a short paper on a topic of their choice related to the material covered that week. The Short Paper must be written following the Short Paper Rubric, with guidelines posted in the Announcements.
Due Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 per the course schedule.

Assignment 2: Term Research and Application Paper
(3 parts, (a) topic statement, (b) annotated bibliography, and (c) final paper for a total of 50% of the term grade).

Each student will select a topic to explore and research for the final paper, which is due at the end of the course. The student must submit a (a) well-defined topic statement in Week 3 (5% of the student's grade), an (b) annotated bibliography in Week 10 (10% of the student's grade), and (c) the final research and application paper is due in the final week in APA 7.0 format (35% of the student's grade).

The paper must be written as a comprehensive research paper using the APA template supplied by Dr. Smart or another APA 7.0 template, citing the literature (peer-reviewed journal articles), exploring the topic, interleaving source topics, and integrating an application as to how a clinician would use the research in clinical practice. The paper needs to have the following sections:

➢ Abstract with keywords.
➢ Introduction
➢ Purpose and Problem
➢ Theoretical Framework
➢ Exploration of the Research
➢ Clinical Application
➢ Conclusion
➢ References

There can be sub-sections within each major section. The paper should be between 20 and 30 pages. **Final Submission is Due April 30th, 11:59 PM**

Topic Statement (5%)

The topic statement should be a concise paragraph stating the specific research topic and its relevance for clinical practice. **Due Week 3: February 1 at 11:59 PM**

Annotated Bibliography (10%)

The annotated bibliography needs to include at least 10 peer-reviewed journal articles, and you can use other credible academic sources, such as books, etc. The annotated bibliography should be written in APA format, with the citation followed by a paragraph or two that summarizes the relevance of the source to the selected topic. **Due Week 10: March 22 at 11:59 PM**

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

1. Professionalism: It is expected that you demonstrate professionalism. For the purposes of this course, professionalism will be exhibited by the student: (a) completing all assigned readings, (b) submitting assignments by the deadline, and (c) adhering to the university student code of conduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating).

2. Writing Assignments: Prepare all written assignments according to the APA Publications Manual (7th ed.), as appropriate. You can access information regarding basic APA style at http://owl.english.purdue.edu or the Learning Center located on the main floor of the library.

   a. All submissions will be reviewed by Turnitin to check for plagiarism. Turnitin will provide a score indicating the percentage of the paper it determines to be paraphrased incorrectly. Dr. Smart will review all submissions with a score of 30% or higher, specifically verifying the sources. If the source does not support the claim, the professor will return the paper to the student for revisions. If, upon return submission, the paper remains not cited correctly, the professor will assign a final grade to the paper according to the rubric.
   b. The best way to avoid potential confusion is to become proficient in paraphrasing or stating things in multiple ways that differ from the original source(s).

   c. East Texas A&M University strongly encourages all students to take advantage of student resources. Bonus points are awarded to students who utilize the Writing Center staff to enhance their writing skills.
Lab: http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/depart ments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/onlineWritingLab.aspx

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool
https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a East Texas A&M University campus open computer lab, etc.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at https://www.tamuc.edu/student-code-of-conduct/.

If you believe someone has engaged in behaviors that do not align with the Code of Student Conduct or you have other concerns, please visit the File a Report page at https://www.tamuc.edu/office-of-student-rights-and-responsibilities/concems-incident-reporting/

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate student academic dishonesty policy
Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate student academic dishonesty policy
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Graduate student academic dishonesty policy:
https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesProcedures/13stude nts/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf

Graduate student academic dishonesty form:
https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonest yForm.pdf

East Texas A&M University Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please visit the Attendance

Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors 'guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Services
Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5930
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Website: http://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campusServices/StudentDisabilityServices/default.aspx

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit **www.tamuc.edu/counsel**

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate **Bill** - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.Rl, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:
http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34Safet yOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.Rl.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE SCHEDULE   PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE

Week	Topic	Read	Assignment
Week 1 (01/12 - 01/18)	Introduction to the Psychology of Aging	Review the Course Syllabus Carefully **Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 1**	**January 19th Holiday**
Week 2 (01/20-01/25)	Biological Theories of Aging	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 2**	**Short Paper 1 Due 1/25 at 11:59 PM**
Week3 (01/26-02/01)	The Aging Body ad Age-Related Health Conditions	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 3**	**Topic Statement Due 02/01 at 11:59PM**
Week 4 (02/02-02/08)	Changes to the Brain	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 4**	**Short Paper 2 Due 02/08 at 11:59PM**
Week 5 (02/9-02/15)	Personality and Emotional Development	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 5**	**Feb. 16th Holiday**
Week 6 (02/16-02/22)	Mental Health and Aging	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 6**	**Short Paper 3 Due 02/22 at 11:59 PM**
Week 7 (02/23-03/01)	Cognition and Aging	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 7**	
Week 8 (03/02-03/08)	Cognitive Reserve and Cognitive Interventions	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 8**	**Short Paper 4 Due 03/08 at 11:59PM**
Week9-**Spring Break (03/9-03/15)**	**Spring Break**	**Spring Break**	**Spring Break**
Week 10 (03/16-03/22)	Neurocognitive Disorders in Late Life	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 9**	**Annotated Bibliography Due 03/22 at 11:59PM**
Week 11 (03/23-03/29)	Relationships, Families and Aging	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 10**	
Week 12 (03/30-04/05)	Aging, Work, and Retirement	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 11**	**Short Paper 5 Due 04/05 at 11:59PM**
Week 13 (04/06-4/12)	Death and Dying	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 12**	
Week 14 (04/13-4/19)	Cultural Differences in Aging	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 13**	
Week 15 (04/20-4/26)	Aging and the Legal System	**Read:** Woodhead and Yochim **Chapter 14**	
Week 16 (04/27-05/03)	Final Paper Due in lieu of final exam	Final submission week	**Final Paper Due April 30 11:59PM**