**OCL Course Guide**

**PSY 200: Lifespan Psychology**

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**Rationale**

I have been teaching lifespan psychology in the classroom since 1996 and online since 1998. The majority of my students have been pursuing degrees in nursing, allied health, or education. My goal in education is to give the students useful concepts that can be applied to their future careers. Many of the activities and assignments contained in the course reflect this emphasis. Teaching lifespan is challenging in a number of ways. First, it is a course with a lot of content to be covered in single semester or quarter. Second, most textbooks focus heavily on child development and units on adulthood, late adulthood, and death and dying are somewhat brief. Certainly, this reflects the large amount of research on child development and our more recent growing interest in the second part of life with the “graying” of populations around the world. I have tried to bring balance to lifespan by incorporating more research that addresses contexts of development such as culture, work, and family life when addressing adulthood.

I was attracted to this project because I believe in making education as accessible and affordable as possible. The role of publishers and authors as primary providers of information is rapidly changing as more resources become available online. Instructors can have access to information more quickly by going directly to the source (such as the National Institute on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control, etc.) than was possible when using a published text that might be several years old. This ability enables instructors to have direct access to updated information. I chose the online format for developing this course in order to provide links to updated, informative resources. And I decided to write the lessons rather than adopt a text for several reasons. First, there were no lifespan texts available during course development that met our requirement to keep costs at or below $30 for students. (Some publishers offered old versions of their texts at our price point!) Second, by writing content in an online format, instructors who use the course can easily modify or expand upon course content and simply save it and use it in the way they choose. An adopting instructor can tailor the content to meet the needs of their own students and time frame for offering the course. Third, the use of links within the lessons enhances students’ resourcefulness. They can actively engage in activities, delve more deeply into areas of interest by going to related links, and become more independent learners with investigative skills that can be used life-long.

**Future Directions**

My intention in designing the course was to make it as easy to navigate as possible (all of the information on a particular topic is contained within a single lesson folder) and by organizing content based on course objectives, instructors can easily add to or remove objectives and content without having to guess where an objective was covered. In sum, this is intended to be a flexible, open course that can be modified by instructors depending on their own needs. I hope that it can easily be translated across cultures and institutions.

**Open Sources**

The images, audio clips, videos, and other materials used within the course are from open sources. I searched for images using from Creative Commons Open Sources and when unable to locate an appropriate image, contributed images my own images. There are no copyright restrictions on the materials contained within the course. My authored text is free for use under the CC-BY licensure.

**Ways to Offer the Course:**

This course was designed fully online but may also be taught as a face-to-face or hybrid course by making printed versions of the text contained within the lessons available to students in a face-to-face format, or by using classroom meeting time for lecture or class discussion if teaching as a hybrid course. All of the required reading, video and audio clip content, web interactive exercises, exams, and narrated power point presentations are included in the course material contained in the twelve lessons.

**Prerequisites:**

**ENGL 100/ESLA 117 or placement in ENGL& 101; and PSYC& 100** are course prerequisites**.** General psychology is a prerequisite to the course. However, a student can easily take this course without having had general psychology if the instructor chooses to override the prerequisite requirement. The general psychology background information needed is included in the lessons.

**Course Description**

Growth and development through the life span including physical, social, cognitive and neurological development. Topics covered included daycare, education, disabilities, parenting, types of families, gender identity and roles, career decisions, illnesses and treatments, aging, retirement, generativity, and dying.

**Course Objectives**

\*The student will outline stages of development, contrast study approaches, and understand different research methods. The student will have an understanding of prenatal development, care and the birth process. The student will identify terms and summarize theories regarding the physical, cognitive, emotional and social behavior of infants.

\*The student will be able to outline the stages and developmental tasks of childhood and describe physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. The student will contrast childhood developmental theories, language development theories, and identify the order and structure of language development.

\*The student will be able to outline the stages and developmental tasks of adolescence. This includes describing sexual, behavioral, cognitive, social and emotional development. The student will also identify terms which relate to the issues and problems of adolescents.

\*The student will be able to outline the stages of adult development and the various developmental tasks associated with each stage. The student will describe adult physical conditions, transitions, as well as cognitive, social and emotional states. In addition, the student will be able to contrast theories and identify basic terms, influences, and issues for all adult stages of development. The student will explore end of life care, grief, and bereavement.

**Assignments and Activities to Support Course Goals:**

**Assigned Discussions**:

Students participate in four formal discussions with other members of the class through the discussion board when the course if offered in the hybrid or online format.  The discussion boards are located within the Lessons tab. The dates for participation should be provided both underneath the discussion link and on the course calendar. Posting and responding is the minimum requirement to earn 5 points. Each of these discussions counts for 5 percent of the overall course grade.  Each of these discussions allows the student the opportunity to share thoughts with other members of the class. Topics include: location in the lifespan, labeling childhood disorders, love and relationships, and death and dying.

**Open Discussions:**

Students also have access to an “Open Discussion Forum” located at the top of the Lessons. This is a space for all class members to post and respond to others questions and comments related to the course. This is not graded and not mandatory. This forum can be used to help students get to know one another, to make use of knowledge and expertise, and to find study partners for the collaborative essay exams.

**Exams**

**Collaborative, Open-Note Exams:**

Students take four **collaborative/open-note essay exams** in which they apply course content.  These essay questions may be coauthored on Wikis, collaboratively through a web conferencing tool such as Blackboard Collaborate, or via email exchanges.  Each essay exam counts 5 percent of for a total of 20 percent of your course grade.   Students collaborate in groups of up to three members.  Students have approximately one week to compose their answers.  They are encouraged to use notes, assigned readings, and partners to gain mastery over course content.

There are also **ungraded, practice 20 item multiple choice exams f**or each unit.  These may be used to check mastery of course material. These are located within the Lessons tab.

**Unit, Closed-Note Exams:**

Students take four unit exams that are found online (or may be printed to be offered face-to-face). These exams are located in the Lessons section of the course. Each exam is worth 10 percent of the course grade. Together, exams comprise 40 percent of the course grade. These exams consist of 50 multiple choice/True-False questions. Study guide questions are provided in the Lessons tab to assist students in preparing for each unit’s exam. The exams options vary depending on the course management system and faculty preferences.

**The Application Paper**

Students gather information throughout the course on concepts that they find useful in their work, future career, or personal life and collecting those in an imaginary 'toolkit'. They are encouraged to be thinking of how they might use some of these concepts/theories and present those concepts, their application, and a case for the importance of these in a 1500 word, double-spaced, typed paper. **This is not a research paper**.  It is an application paper in which students demonstrate their ability to use/apply concepts from the class.  They may receive up to 4 points for each of 5 concepts: 1 point for a clear definition of the concept, 1 point for a thorough and appropriate application of the concept, 1 point for spelling/grammar, and 1 point for appropriate length.  Tips for completing this exercise are contained in the **“How to Write a Perfect Application Paper”** in the Lessons tab of the course. This assignment makes up 20 percent of the overall course grade and is submitted at the end of the course.

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| **Course Links**  **Netiquette** refers to guidelines expected to be following during online course communication. These guidelines help to enhance respect and clarity when sending and receiving message. These guidelines can be found at [**http://www.online.uwc.edu/Technology/onlEtiquette.asp**](http://www.online.uwc.edu/Technology/onlEtiquette.asp)and are posted on the main course page. Students are advised to read and review these before beginning the course.  **Course Navigation** is described in a brief video orientation found at[**http://www.screencast.com/users/LOverstreet/folders/Default/media/47aa709d-7b42-49fa-8cb5-6f98c31f304f**](http://www.screencast.com/users/LOverstreet/folders/Default/media/47aa709d-7b42-49fa-8cb5-6f98c31f304f)  The main course page can be set up to include calendar reminders, announcements, links to discussions, grades, a class roster, links to lecture recordings and other important resources. The course lessons are accessible through the lessons tab. All course content is included in these modules. For example, written text, web links, audio clips, video, and power point slides that pertain to a period in the life span are located in a single module. Exams and other assessments can be set to become available on specific dates.  All links for course content are contained within the lessons.  **About the Author:**  Laura Overstreet earned a BA at the University of North Texas, and an MA and PhD at Texas Woman’s University, both in Denton, Texas. She has been teaching lifespan psychology online and on campus since the mid-1990s. She currently teaches lifespan psychology, child development, and general psychology at Whatcom Community College in Bellingham, Washington. She also teaching courses in family, marital interaction, sexuality, gender, social psychology, and education in the sociology department at Western Washington University also located in Bellingham, Washington. |