Course time: MR 3:30; T 4:30
Course location: MDCL 1102

Professor:
Dr. Jennifer M Ostovich
Email: jmostovich@mcmaster.ca
Phone: Please do not phone me. Consider instead an email, a visit during office hours, or a posting on our Avenue to Learn message boards (if not a private matter).
Office: PC 415A
Office hours: T 2-3:30; monitor announcements section of website for cancellations, changes, and extra hours.

Teaching Assistants:
Sarah Creighton: creighs@mcmaster.ca
Emilie Harvey: harvee3@mcmaster.ca
Sandra Thomson: thomsosj@mcmaster.ca

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Course Description: What does or does not change with age? Most of us view the process of aging in terms of losses: loss of looks, health, cognitive efficacy, perceptual ability, and, eventually, of life. In this course, however, we will consider research and theory on what stays the same, and on what is gained, as well. Topics will include, but are not limited to, perception, cognition, personality, mental and physical health, social relationships.


Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

E-mail Policy: E-mail must originate from your designated McMaster e-mail account. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your mcmaster.ca account. You should monitor this account regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco) will be ignored. We have this policy for three reasons: (1) to reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; (2) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; and (3) to teach the professional use of e-mail. Remember: E-mails to your professors are professional communications. They should include correct spelling and punctuation, should have an informative subject line, and should be brief.
**Website Policy**: This course has an Avenue to Learn website. You are expected to check this website with regularity for announcements, updates, discussion board postings, and other valuable information. It is your responsibility to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the website’s **discussion boards** is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries (e.g., questions about course content and the running of this course, but not emails reporting illness or other private matters) is preferred to email communication. I have hundreds of students each term and cannot possibly answer all emails. Questions asked on the discussion board allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer (and therefore not have to ask the question themselves). Discussion board questions also provide a learning experience for students who wish to answer these questions themselves.

Please see the top of each discussion board for **directions on how to use the board**. Posts that ignore these directions will be deleted. The professor reserves the right to ban students from the course website if they use the board inappropriately (e.g., posting inappropriate comments). This will involve lost access to slides and other important course information.

Finally, students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

**Policy re. the Recording of Lectures**: No student is permitted to record lectures, unless they have CSD documentation that they require this service due to disability (e.g., dyslexia). Those with permission to record lectures **may not share** their recording with others. Any infraction of this policy will be severely dealt with.

Why? You will have difficulties in your post-graduate, real-world job if you are not able to listen effectively to, and take note of, the right things. Note-taking gives you practice in this very important skill.

**Participation**: In-class and discussion board participation are strongly encouraged. Remember, if you have a question, your colleagues probably have one, too, and will appreciate it if you speak up. Don’t be shy about asking questions!

**Assessment**: Your final mark will be based on your performance on two multiple choice (MC) quizzes, a short answer (SA) midterm, and a final exam that includes both MC and SA questions.

The quizzes will consist of several multiple-choice items, drawn from readings and lecture materials, and will each be worth 10% of your final mark (= 20%).

The midterm will include short answer, lecture-based questions only, and will be worth 35% of your final mark.

The final exam will include a combination of short answer and multiple choice questions, drawn from readings and lecture material, and will be worth 45% of your final mark (35% SA section, 10% MC section).

**NB**: The instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

**Test-Taking Policy**: Tests will be run like final examinations. You can bring only writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like kleenex and bottled water to your desk. All other materials, especially electronics, must stay in your bag, at the front or side of the room in which you write your test.
Moreover, you must bring your student ID to all tests. Once seated, you must put your student card on your desk; your ID will be compared with a our most recent class list; anyone not on the class list will have their ID card confiscated, and will be asked to leave the room immediately.

**Missed Tests:** Recently, McMaster has adopted a self-report tool, the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF), for reporting absences of 5 days or less. If your absence is longer than 5 days, then you must submit a doctor’s certificate to your faculty’s Office of the Associate Dean. Please make yourself aware of the ins and outs of reporting absences by going to [http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/) and [http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/).

It is your responsibility to submit all excuses for missed tests *within one week* of the original test date. It is *also* your responsibility to *speak with your professor as soon as possible*. Senate regulations for petitions for special consideration have always required that: "40. The student shall make a prompt and timely request for special consideration." No requests for special consideration will be accepted after one month.

If you miss the midterm, then a *make-up test* will be provided during class time about one week (usually to the day) after the original test. Watch the news section of our Avenue website for details.

*If you miss this make-up test,* then you must once again report your absence to the university, as described above; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero (0) on the missed work. If you can provide an acceptable excuse for having missed the make-up, then either (a) an alternate make-up assignment will be designed for you or (b) the value of the midterm will be added to the value of the final exam, resulting in a high-value final. Please note that if you miss more than one assessment, you will have difficulty passing this course; moreover, you will lose option (b) on the second and all subsequent missed assessments.

**Final Grade Calculations:** Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade, according to the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 (A+)</td>
<td>77-79 (B+)</td>
<td>67-69 (C+)</td>
<td>57-59 (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89 (A)</td>
<td>73-76 (B)</td>
<td>63-66 (C)</td>
<td>53-56 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 (A-)</td>
<td>70-72 (B-)</td>
<td>60-62 (C-)</td>
<td>50-52 (D-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-49 (F)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please Note:** The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on a individual basis, in the light of special circumstances. Students who *do not pass the final*, or whose final exam mark is their lowest mark in the course, will *not* have their final marks adjusted up under any circumstances – poor performance on a cumulative final demonstrates a lack of familiarity with course content.

**Please Note as Well:** I do *not* do special favours for one student that I would not also do the whole class. For example, I will not, under normal circumstances, bump up a final mark for any one student (e.g., 69.2% is a C+ for all students; it is *not* a B- for you, but a C+ for the rest of the class). Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. I live by this rule because special favours to one student are unfair to the multitude of students who neither ask for nor get those same favours. Therefore, if you are concerned about your final mark, it is your responsibility to visit with me or with one of your TA’s for guidance.

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero (0) on an assignment, loss of course credit with a notation on the transcript (“grade F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is *your* responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).
**How To Do Well in this Course.**

First: Read the syllabus *very* carefully!

Second: Read the website carefully as well! Follow the discussions, and read any announcements and files posted there. Check the website *several times per week.*

Third: Know the *missed tests policy.* Do exactly as this policy asks if you miss a test, or you may be in for a nasty surprise.

Fourth: Attend lectures. You cannot do well in this course if you do not attend lectures. Although the textbook does support the lecture material, lectures often go beyond, or have a different focus than, the textbook. Therefore, if you miss lectures, you will miss important information.

Fifth: Read your textbook and any other assigned readings. You cannot do well in this course if you do not supplement lectures with *independent learning from the textbook.* I do not cover all of the materials in the textbook; there is no time for that in a one-term course. Therefore, I expect you to spend some of your study-time identifying important concepts from the text, and learning them. Independent learning is an important skill. You will be expected to do this in your upper level courses, and – more importantly – in what academics call “the real world”.

Sixth: Learn how to take effective notes. Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on. I post the slides after lectures for several reasons. The most important of these is that no one in the real world is going to give you slides! In order to do well in the real world, you will have to know how to cope with large amounts of incoming information. If you have trouble taking effective notes, then please visit CSD, or see me or one of your TA’s, for advice.

Please note that my slides contain only basic information – bullet points, figures, and pictures. You cannot recreate lectures, and therefore cannot succeed in this course, by depending on them instead of attending lecture.

Finally: Think carefully about the information I’m presenting you in lecture. Two things are usually happening: first, I’m telling you the story of some theory or idea; and second, I’m giving you details on research that helped tell the story. I expect you to be able discuss both theory and research on tests, so try to figure out

(1) what’s the story? (i.e., the theory), and

(2) what does the research we learned about tell us about that story?

If you study with these questions in mind, then you should do well on the midterm and final. If you find that you’re not sure what the story is or how the research fits in with or supports the story, then please make use of the discussion board and any office hours offered by me or by your TA’s!
SCHEDULE AND READINGS
This schedule is subject to change.

Below is a list of topics (with associated readings listed in blue) that I expect to cover this term, divided into two halves: pre-SA-midterm and post-SA-midterm. Even though I will not cover the entire contents of any given chapter in lecture, you are expected to read and learn its contents.

MC Quizzes: Thursday 27 January; Thursday 17 March
SA Midterm: Tuesday 15 February
Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

A note on dates and deadlines: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

A note on the readings: Plan carefully so that you do not find yourself “cramming” the readings at the last minute. Extra readings may be assigned as we go. These will be announced in class and on Avenue; links to extra readings will be posted on Avenue; it is your responsibility to keep track of extra materials.

SECTION 1: 3 Jan to 15 Feb
Introduction and Research Methods ➔ Read Ch’s 1 and 2
Physical Changes ➔ Read Ch 9
Health ➔ Read Ch 10
Cognition ➔ Read Ch’s 4 and 5

SECTION 2: 17 Feb to 5 Apr
Personality ➔ Read pages 46-73 and Ch 3
Mental Health ➔ Read Ch 11
Social Roles Throughout the Lifespan: Family, Marriage, Friendship, & Caregiving ➔ Read Ch’s 6 and Ch 7
Successful Aging ➔ Read pages 209-211; other readings TBA.
Death, Dying, and Bereavement ➔ Read Ch 12