This course is a fourth year seminar focusing on the importance of the life course perspective in understanding mental health, from early life to old age. The purposes of this course can be described from a number of perspectives:

- A follow-up course to a general survey course in mental health with a more intensive focus on one major perspective.
- An opportunity to propose and pursue research on the impact of the life course perspective on understanding life chances in the long-term.
- Development of skills in the specification of ideas and the assessment of evidence in actual analyses of data.
- Understanding the “long view” of lives and connecting experience and exposures across life stages, with an emphasis on the connections between childhood experience and adult life.

In this course, your course will include a presentation in class, a short 7 page biography of someone you know, emphasizing the role of life course concepts, and a group research-based paper. The paper will allow you to pose a research question raised in the literature you read in this course and then conduct the research to address this issue, using one of two data sets provided. Depending on the biography, you may have the opportunity to test one of the issues you raise in the research conducted in this class. In the class presentation you will review some the existing research or theory in this area. Your group should consider a project that follows from some issue in the literature we discuss. In the early weeks I will provide some overview of the life course perspective and the sociology of mental health, as a quick orientation to these areas.

The schedule starting on the next page describes the focus of each week as well as the required work. In order to promote class discussion, you will also post two questions about the readings online, on any two weeks you choose. The presenter each week will take into account these questions in their presentations. Posted questions are due online the night before the scheduled class, before 9 pm on the Sunday night before class.
The biography is a short 7-page (double-spaced) analysis of the “mental health trajectory” of someone you know (anonymously presented), using life course concepts to explain changes in their mental health from childhood to adulthood. You can use someone in a published biography, if you prefer. Note: if you do not have a suitable subject for this paper, you can submit four additional comments to the discussion board, each 2-3 paragraphs in length.

The last portion of the course focuses on your group project. The groups for this project can be 2-3 in size, and they must be formed voluntarily. Your grade on this project will be a collective grade -- meaning everyone will receive the same grade. This project will occur in two stages -- an initial descriptive overview of the concepts you want to study and what your hypotheses are, with descriptive statistics, presented in class as a group, followed by a full research report handed in the last day of class, including the data analysis you propose and the discussion of those results. The group project should be 10-15 pages of text, with tables additional to that total.

Prerequisites

IMPORTANT NOTE: The prerequisite for this course is Sociology 202 (Statistics) or its equivalent. Students lacking the prerequisite can be removed at any time.

Required Work

1. Class presentation 20%
2. Assigned posted questions on readings (2) 10%
3. Analytical Biography or 4 additional posted questions 30%
4. Group research presentation: hypotheses and descriptive stats 15%
5. Group research project: Final report 25%

Class Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sources: Section / Readings</th>
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<td>January 5</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Overview: The Life Course Perspective</td>
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<td>January 12</td>
<td>Overview: The Life Course and Mental Health</td>
<td>1. Elder et al.</td>
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<td>Concepts and Themes</td>
<td>1. Dannefer</td>
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<td>1. Moen</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Overview: Interpreting Results in Articles</td>
<td>2. Mirowsky and Ross</td>
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<td>January 26</td>
<td>Class presentations: discussion of readings</td>
<td>3. Shanahan</td>
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<td>3. Wheaton and Gotlib</td>
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Trajectories and Turning Points

3. Caspi et al
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sources: Section / Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Review of Basic Statistical Concepts</td>
<td>4. Elder and Liker</td>
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<td>Class presentations: discussion of readings:</td>
<td>4. Turner, Wheaton, Lloyd</td>
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<td>February 9</td>
<td>Class Data Sets</td>
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<td>Intro to SAS University Edition; Running Template Programs</td>
<td>5. McLeod and Pavalko</td>
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<td>Class presentations: discussion of readings:</td>
<td>5. McLeod and Fettes</td>
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<td><em>Selection and Causation</em></td>
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<td>February 23</td>
<td>Discussion of Group Projects</td>
<td>6. Pudrovska 2014</td>
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<td>Class presentations: discussion of readings</td>
<td>6. Umberson et al.</td>
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<td><em>DUE: Analytical Biography (7 pp.)</em></td>
<td>6. Schilling</td>
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<td><em>Cumulative Adversity</em></td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>Discussion: Issues in Data Analysis</td>
<td>6. Goosby</td>
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<td>Class presentations: discussion of readings</td>
<td>6. Masten</td>
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<td><em>Adversity and Resilience</em></td>
<td>6. Janoff-Bulman and Wortman</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td><em>Presentation of Group Projects I</em></td>
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<td>March 16</td>
<td><em>Presentation of Group Projects II</em></td>
<td>7. Wheaton and Clarke</td>
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<td>Class presentations, readings:</td>
<td>7. Wheaton and Young</td>
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<td><em>Social Contexts in Life History</em></td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>Questions re Group Projects</td>
<td>8. Yang</td>
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<td>Class presentations, readings:</td>
<td>8. Pudrovksa et al</td>
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<td><em>Later Life</em></td>
<td>8. Wethington</td>
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<td>Class presentation, readings:</td>
<td>9. Turner et al</td>
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**Reading**

The reading list attached includes targeted reading for each week as well as a larger list for reference purposes and to help with your research. It is a good idea to ground your research in
something you read in these sources. The readings that could be considered each week are highlighted, but other readings in each section can be exchanged with these readings, depending on student interest. All required readings will be posted on Blackboard. Your comments and questions about readings will also be posted on Blackboard.

**Data and Statistical Software**

You will be analyzing one of two specialized data sets: either the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), which is a national U.S. sample interviewed three times between 1987 and 2002, or the Toronto Study of Intact Families, conducted between 1992-1996. The NSFH contains a rich array of life history information in a large national sample aged 18-87 in 1987 followed over a significant portion of their adult lives. The Toronto Study of Intact Families is a one-time interview study of 888 families in Toronto, including the mother, father, and a 9-16 year old child in each family. This study includes life history information for the parents.

You will be using SAS University Edition to analyze your research question. This software is free, **but it must be installed on a 64bit computer, whether a Mac or a PC.** This means that at least one member of each group should have a computer of this type. Instructions for installing SAS UE will be reviewed in class, but I will be posting the instructions in the early weeks of the class.

**Student Accommodation**

Please see me if you have a disability or other need that requires accommodation or classroom modification. I will be glad to help you in whatever way I can.

**Missed Deadlines**

Late work will never be accepted without proper documentation from a student’s physician or college registrar. If you miss a test or a paper deadline, follow the steps here before contacting me. Telling me why you missed a deadline cannot be considered on its own.

- In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to me, and submitted with your work.
- If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar. The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work.

Please note that forms that scanned, Xeroxed, or emailed cannot be accepted.

Late work will be graded on a 90% basis if it is within three days of the due date, and on an 80% basis if submitted up to 7 days after the due date. Work will not accepted after that point.
**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to know and adhere to the University's principles of academic integrity. Any act of plagiarism or other unethical behavior will be addressed in accordance with University guidelines. Students should be aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second course, is considered an academic offense. Please see the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)) for specific information on academic integrity at the U of T.

**Appointments**

I do not hold specific office hours. But it should be easy for you to arrange appointments with me by email. Students often make appointments to discuss readings before they present – but this is your choice. I will also be meeting with groups to discuss their research projects.
NOTE: Highlighted readings are the primary readings to be selected for presentations. Not all readings highlighted will be included. A selection of readings will be made from week to week.

1. Concepts and Themes


2. Basic Patterns


Over the Life Course: Trajectories and Turning Points. New York: Cambridge University Press.


4. The Long View of Lives


5. **Selection and Causation**


6. **Cumulative Adversity and Resilience**


study: Associations with first-onset DSM-IV disorders. Social Science & Medicine, 71(10), 1847-1847-1854. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.08.015


7. Social Contexts and Life History


8. Mid to Later Life


9. Traumatic Events


House, James S., Paula M. Lantz and Pamela Herd. 2005. Continuity and change in the social stratification of aging and health over the life course: evidence from a nationally
