

Spring 2012

**PSYCHOLOGY OF OLDER ADULTS WITH MEMORY-LOSS,
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, AND OTHER DEMENTIAS**

Psych 343

Instructor: Eilon Caspi Ph.D.

Class time: Monday 7:00 PM – 9:45 PM

Location: M01–0213

Office hours & Location: Mon 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM & by appointment; M04–0247

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Course Description and Goals

Over five million older adults in the United States currently experience substantial memory-loss and this number is expected to grow to over 13 million by 2050. There is a critical need for our society to understand the emotional, psychological, cognitive, functional, behavioral, social, and ethical implications of living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. There is also an urgent need to acquire evidence-based knowledge about the ways in which the various needs in these domains of function could be met. No less important is the need to understand how this knowledge can be applied when working directly with older adults with memory-loss in the community and long-term care residences.

Throughout the course we will review the major factors in the older persons' social and physical environment that have direct daily impact on their psychological well-being and quality of life. We will explore various models of care, approaches, and strategies that promote positive emotional states, prevent distressing behaviors, and enhance functional independence in this vulnerable population.

Findings from research studies will be shared throughout the course to demonstrate the current state of knowledge about this population. Numerous real-life case studies will be shared to illustrate the various aspects of the experience of living with memory-loss in later life. The course will be largely lecture-based while significant portion will be dedicated to class discussion.

Course Objectives

1. Challenge the prevalently held assumptions related to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
2. Raise awareness to the cognitive, psychological, and behavioral challenges experienced by older adults with varying degrees of memory-loss.
3. Identify the ways in which various interrelated factors in the older person's social and physical environment can enhance or hinder the person's psychological well-being.
4. Demonstrate the ways in which the current state of knowledge could be applied in care delivery settings in the community and long-term care residences.

The course objectives will be achieved by extensive reading from selected journal articles and book chapters; engaging lectures and discussions; sharing research findings; preparation of weekly reaction papers and questions; presentation of films; and the use of the knowledge accumulated over the course in the preparation of the final paper.

Readings

Text Book

The required text for the course is: **Kitwood, T. (1997). *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first***. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press. Students can purchase a copy through Amazon (not available at bookstore). A copy of the book will be placed on Course Reserve at the Healey Library.

The syllabus lists readings (mostly journal articles and book chapters) by the week (detailed in the weekly schedule below). These required readings can be obtained through the course's **e-reserve** page on the Healey Library website.

Course Requirements, Due Dates, and Grading Criteria

The requirements for the course include 10 weekly reaction papers including 10 sets of two weekly questions, final paper, class attendance, and class participation.

Written materials should be provided on time, as late assignments will be penalized. Written work should be typewritten in 12-point font and double-spaced with appropriate margins.

Weekly Reaction Papers – 30%

Each week, students will be asked to prepare and submit (via email) a 2-page paper in response to the assigned readings for the week. Each weekly reaction paper (that will be submitted on time) will receive 3% of the overall course grade. This means that consistent and timely preparation of 10 thoughtful reaction papers (out of 13 classes) will grant the students with 30% of the overall course grade. The goals of the reaction paper are to enhance students' engagement with the reading material and stimulate class discussion to promote an enriching and meaningful learning experience for you and your classmates. While the students are required to read all the weekly readings, for the weekly assignment you can choose only one article or book chapter that you find most interesting to you and write the reaction paper on it. If you choose to do so, you can also write the reaction paper on two or three of the reading material assigned for that particular week. You are also invited to demonstrate connections between the weekly readings and topics covered earlier in the semester. Students will be given flexibility with regard to how they construct these papers, so long as they demonstrate they have read and thought critically about the assigned materials.

Suggested components for the weekly reaction paper include:

1. Your thoughts, feelings, reactions, & reflections
2. Why should I care? or What makes these issues important?
3. Practical implications related specifically to older adults' psychological well-being.

The 10 weekly reaction papers are due (via email) on **Friday 5:00 PM** prior to each class for which the readings are assigned. This will allow the instructor sufficient time to read the reaction papers and plan to incorporate selected elements from the students' reactions into the class.

In addition, at the end of each reaction paper, students will be asked to provide two questions for discussion prompted by the reading (see detail below).

Two Weekly Questions – 20%

Two questions about the weekly reading material (submitted as part of the reaction papers). Students will be granted 2% of the overall course grade for each set of two questions they will develop and submit no later than **Friday by 5:00 P.M.** The students are expected to prepare and submit a total of 10 sets of Two Weekly Questions (out of 13 classes). The questions can be developed about any one or all of the weekly reading material. The questions should reflect issues you need more clarification about or want to understand better, issues you are curious to know more about, and critical questions you might have about the reading.

Term Paper – 30%

All students will be asked to complete a term paper (approximately 15 pages) that includes a literature review and analysis of a manageable topic relevant to psychology of older adults with memory-loss. Students will choose their own topic but will be asked to schedule a meeting with the instructor at least once during office hours or by appointment at another time to discuss plans for researching and writing the paper. **The topic of the term paper should be discussed in person with and approved by the instructor anytime before the 9th class meeting (April 2nd).** As a preparation for the meeting with the instructor, students are expected to **submit (at least 24 hours prior to the meeting) a 1-page Term Paper Writing Plan.** This planning document is intended to assist you in the process and should include the following components: brief description of the topic you wish to write about, goals and rationale for writing the paper, the dimensions of the phenomenon you want to cover in the paper, potential practical implications of the paper and/or gaps in the literature the paper will aim to address. Additional requirements and instructions for the term paper will be provided during the course of the semester. **The term paper is due at the beginning of the last class on May 7.** In fairness to students who turn their final papers in on time, late papers will lose 5 points (out of 100) for each overdue day. Grades for the term papers will be given by May 21.

Policy on extensions

Extensions generally are not given for weekly reaction papers, two weekly questions, and term papers. If you anticipate difficulty with due dates, please let me know as far in advance of the date as possible. Under no circumstances I will accept a reaction paper and set of questions after the due day and time.

Class Attendance – 10%

Absences from class should generally occur only in unavoidable situations, and notification in advance is required whenever possible. Absence of more than one class will be penalized.

Class Participation – 10%

Active student participation in class discussion will be crucial for the success of the course. Students are expected to attend each class on time, having completed the required reading for the week, submitted the weekly reaction paper and questions on time, and ready to take part in class discussions. Class participation will constitute 10% of the final grade of the course.

Grading scale

The following scale will be used to determine your grade:

A 93–100	C 73–76
A- 90–92	C- 70–72
B+ 87–89	D+ 67–69
B 83–86	D 63–66
B- 80–82	D- 60–62
C+ 77–79	F 0–59

Academic Support Services

Academic Support Services (Campus Center 1st floor 1700, 617-287-6550) provides for students in need of tutoring, including in subject matter, math, reading and writing.

Academic Honesty

You will be reading from many sources and will be writing weekly reports, weekly questions, and final paper. I expect that your work is your own. If you describe another person's work or provide their words, you must provide a proper citation in the text and in the reference list. To pass of the work of another as your own, whether with malicious intent or not, is plagiarism.

The University strictly adheres to a Code of Student Conduct regarding issues of cheating, plagiarism, or other inappropriate behavior that interferes with the educational environment. Please review the sections on Academic Standards, Cheating, and Plagiarism, sections II and IV, and V of the Code of Student Conduct in the University Undergraduate Catalog or at:
http://www.umb.edu/student_services/student_rights/code_conduct.html"

Policy on Incompletes

Incompletes are given only in special circumstances when the majority of work has been completed with a passing Grade. In cases where students have a medical emergency earlier in the semester and miss extensive amounts of work, they should withdraw from the class rather than take an incomplete. Students must fill out an Incomplete contract with their instructor, and both the student and faculty member must sign and date the agreement, retain a copy for their records, and submit a copy to the Department.

Student Contact Information

If you have not already done so, it is important that you forward your University email to an email address that you check regularly. WISER allows professors to contact you via your University email account and that address will be used for any needed communications.

Special Services

If you have a disability and feel you will need accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services (Campus Center UL Rm 211; 287-7430).

Course Schedule

Class #	Date	Topic	Important Dates
1.	January 23	Orientation: Course overview. Stigmas and myths about old age and memory-loss.	
2.	January 30	Background on memory-loss, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.	Add/Drops Ends
3.	February 6	Theoretical models.	
4.	February 13	The perspective of the person with memory-loss.	
No Class	February 20	Presidents Day (Holiday).	
5.	February 27	Knowing the life history of the person with dementia.	
6.	March 5	Informal (family) and formal (paid) caregivers.	
No class	March 12	Spring vacation. March 11 to 18 (Sunday to Sunday).	
7.	March 19	The role of language and words during interactions with persons with memory-loss.	
8.	March 26	Communication techniques with persons with dementia.	
9.	April 2	Responsive behaviors and their prevention.	Term paper topics approval due
	April 5 (Thurs)		Pass/Fail Course Withdrawal Date
10.	April 9	The physical environment and its impact on the person.	
No class	April 16	Patriots Day (Holiday)	
11.	April 23	Meaningful activities.	
12.	April 30	Culture change in long-term care residences.	
13.	May 7 – Final class	Summary & reflection on the course.	Term papers due
No class	May 9 (Wed)	Classes End	
No class	May 10 to May 13 (Thurs to Sun)	Study Period	
No class	May 14 to May 18 (Mon to Fri)	Final Exam Period	
No class	May 21 (Mon)		Grading of term papers due
No class	May 28 (Mon)	Memorial Day (Holiday)	

Weekly Reading Schedule

1. Jan 23 – Orientation: Course Overview. Myths and stigmas about old age and memory-loss.

2. Jan 30 – Background on memory-loss, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures – pp. 5-10 and 12-17.

Kuhn, D. (2003, pp. 27-45). Symptoms of the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Chapter 2 in the book: *Alzheimer's early stages: First steps for family, friends, and caregivers*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House.

Maslow, K. (2004). Dementia and serious coexisting medical conditions: A double whammy. *Nursing Clinics of North America*, 39, 561-579.

3. Feb 6 – Theoretical models.

Erikson, E.H. & Erikson, J.M. (1998, pp. 105-114). The ninth stage. Chapter 5 in the book: E.H. Erikson *The life cycle completed*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Kitwood, T. (1997). Introduction (pp. 1-6) & Chapter 1 (pp. 7-19): On being a person. In the book: T. Kitwood. *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Raia, P. (1999, pp. 21-37). Habilitation therapy: A new starscape. In L. Volicer & L. Bloom-Charlette (Eds.), *Enhancing the quality of life in advanced dementia*. Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel.

4. Feb 13 – The perspective of the person with memory-loss.

Lee, J.L. (2003). Life on a roller coaster (pp. 25-35). In J.L. Lee. *Just love me: My life turned upside down by Alzheimer's*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Kastuno, T. (2005). Dementia from the inside: How people with early-stage dementia evaluate their quality of life. *Ageing & Society*, 25, 197-214.

Hershkovits, E. (1995). Struggling over subjectivity: Debates about the "self" and Alzheimer's disease. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 9(2), 146-164.

*** Feb 20 – No class. Presidents Day.**

5. Feb 27 – Knowing the life history of the person with dementia.

Feil, N. (2002). pp. xxiii-xxxi). Florence Trew 1872-1963: "I died." Introduction to the book: *The Validation Breakthrough: Simple techniques for communicating with people with Alzheimer's-type dementia* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Health Professional Press.

Bell, V. & Troxel, D. (2003 pp. 65-90). The life story. Chapter in the book: *The best friends approach to Alzheimer's care*. Baltimore: Health Professional Press.

Caspi, E. (2005, pp. 1-23). Early-life events and current reactive behaviors among elders with dementia. Unpublished manuscript.

6. March 5 – Informal (family) and formal (paid) caregivers.

Montgomery, R.J.V., & Kosloski, K.D. (2000. pp. 143-171). Family caregiving: Change, continuity, and diversity. Chapter 7 in the book: M.P. Lawton & R.L. Rubinstein. *Interventions in dementia care: Toward improving quality of life*.

Kitwood, T. (1997, pp. 118-132). Requirements of a caregiver. Chapter 8 in the book: T. Kitwood. *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Ejaz, F.K., Noelker, L.S., Menne, H.L. & Bagaka, J.G. (2008). The impact of stress and support on direct care worker's job satisfaction. *The Gerontologist*, 48, *Special Issue 1*, 60-70.

*** March 12 – No class. Spring vacation.**

7. March 19 –The role of language & words during interactions with persons with memory-loss.

Kitwood, T. (1997, pp. 45-49). The section: Malignant Social Psychology. In the Chapter: How personhood is undermined. In the book: T. Kitwood. *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Vittoria, A.K. & Cortland, S. (1999). "Our own little language": Naming and the social construction of Alzheimer's disease. *Symbolic Interaction*, 22(4), 361-384.

Williams, K., Kemper, S., & Hummert, M.L. (2003). Improving nursing home communication: An intervention to reduce elderspeak. *The Gerontologist*, 43(2), 242-247.

8. March 26 – Communication techniques with persons with dementia.

Kitwood, T. (1997, pp. 86-102). Improving care: The next step forward. Chapter 6 in the book: T. Kitwood. *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Koenig Coste, J. (2003, 77-84). Know that communication remains possible. Chapter 7 in the book *Learning to speak Alzheimer's: A groundbreaking approach for everyone dealing with the disease*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company]

Alzheimer's Association, (2011). Communication: Best ways to interact with the person with dementia.

9. April 2 – Responsive behaviors and their prevention.

*** Term paper topics approval due.**

Whall, A.L., & Kolanowski, A.M. (2004). The need-driven dementia-compromised behavior model – A framework for understanding the behavioral symptoms of dementia. *Aging & Mental Health*, 8(2), 106-108.

Smith et al. (2004). History, development, and future of the Progressively Lowered Stress Threshold: A conceptual model for dementia care. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 52, 1755-1760.

Cohen-Mansfield, J. (2003 pp. 1-33). Agitation in the elderly: Definitional and theoretical conceptualizations. In the book: D.P. Hay *Agitation in patients with dementia: A practical guide to diagnosis and management*.

10. April 9 – The physical environment and its impact on the person.

Zeisel, J., Silverstein, N.M., Hyde, J., Levkoff, S., Lawton, M.P., & Holmes, W. (2003). Environmental correlates to behavioral health outcomes in Alzheimer's special care units. *The Gerontologist*, 43(5), 697-711.

Mahoney, E.K., Volicer, L., & Hurley, A. (2000, pp. 125-138). Spatial disorientation. Chapter 8 in the book: *Challenging behaviors in dementia*. Baltimore: Health Professional Press.

Caspi, E. (2011 pp. 1-43). Wayfinding Difficulties Among Elders with Dementia in an Assisted Living Residence. Unpublished manuscript.

*** April 16 – No class. Patriots Day.**

11. April 23 – Meaningful activities.

Zgola, J.M. (1999, pp. 158-180). Programming activities. Chapter 11 in the book: J.M. Zgola. *Care that works: A relationship approach*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Simard, J. (1999). Making a positive difference in the lives of nursing home residents with Alzheimer's disease: The Lifestyle Approach. *Alzheimer's Disease and Associated Disorders*, 13 (Suppl. 1), S67-S72.

Schreiner, A.S., Yamamoto, E., & Shiotani, H. (2005). Positive affect among nursing home residents with Alzheimer's dementia: The effect of recreational activity. *Aging and Mental Health*, 9(2), 129-134.

12. April 30 – Culture change in long-term care residences.

Kitwood, T. (1997, pp. 133-144). The task of cultural transformation. Chapter 9 in the book: T. Kitwood. *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Rabig, J., Thomas, W., Kane, R., Cutler, L.J., & McAlilly, S. (2006). Radical redesign of nursing homes: Applying the Green House concept in Tupelo, Mississippi. *The Gerontologist*, 46(4), 533-539.

13. May 7 – Summary and reflections on the course.

*** Term papers due.**