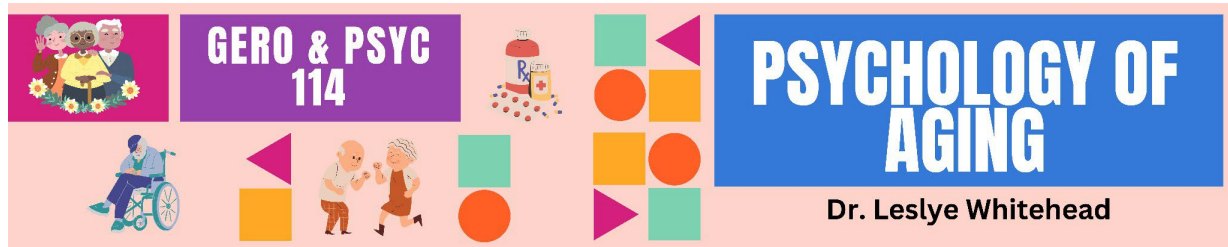


San José State University
College of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology



PSYC 114 & GERO 114: Psychology of Aging

- GERO 114-81 #29307 January 22, 2026 - May 11, 2026 Tu Th 4:30pm-5:45pm
- PSYC 114-81 #27898

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dr. Leslye Whitehead, Ed.D., M.S., LMFT (she/her) Senior Lecturer of Psychology & African American Studies
Email:	Leslye Tinson Whitehead
Faculty Websites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Whitehead's Course HQ website includes all pertinent course policies. • SJSU People: Leslye Whitehead is my public SJSU faculty webpage. • LeslyeTinson.com is my professional MFT website.
Office Hours:	Mondays and Tuesdays 12pm-1pm, OR other times by appointment. (All office hours will be held virtually) Schedule an appointment using my Google Appointments Calendar
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30PM - 5:45PM
Class Location:	This class will meet virtually using Google Meet
Course Format:	This course meets synchronously with "Live" virtual classes. All course materials are located on Canvas.

Catalog Description

- [GERO 114: Psychology of Aging](#), 3 units & [PSYC 114: Psychology of Aging](#), 3 units

Psychological development of middle-aged and older adults emphasizing normative (typical) development in the context of cognitive, socioemotional, biological, and cultural processes. Course content also includes age-related health problems and their prevention.

Prerequisite(s): PSYC 1. Grading: Letter Graded

[Class Schedule](#) | [Syllabus Information](#) | [University Bookstore](#) | [Learn Anywhere](#)

Welcome to our course!

Dear Students,

My name is Dr. Leslye Whitehead and I am excited that you will be joining me in **GERO & PSYC 114: Psychology of Aging** this semester! It's an interesting time to be exploring the science of developmental psychology with a focus on our aging and elderly populations. I look forward to sharing ideas, answering questions, and learning with you in the weeks ahead.



The Spring 2026 Semester session dates are January 20 - May 11, with final exams scheduled thereafter. **Our class officially starts on Thursday, January 22 at 4:30pm**, and that is when you can login to begin on Canvas. To successfully login use the following:

- [SJSU Canvas website](#)

On **Thursday 1/22 during class**, I'll be hosting a Live Course Welcome Session. I'll use Google Meet to give you a tour around our course website and answer your questions. You can join from your desktop, laptop, or smartphone. **It is preferred for you to use your SJSU email account to login.**

The login information will be sent to you via email and posted on Canvas

There are required activities to complete in order to stay actively enrolled. Please login and finish the following Orientation module by **FIRST WEEK OF CLASS**

1. Read the Module 0: Orientation module (includes our syllabus)
2. Participate in the "Intro" Discussion Board
3. Complete the "Getting to Know You" Survey
4. Complete the "Syllabus Quiz"
5. Setup your study plan schedule for the semester

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Course Start Date: Thursday, January 22**
- **Course End Date: Thursday, May 7**
- **Final Project Date: Thursday, May 14**

Feel free to email me if you have any questions or concerns getting started. I'm looking forward to an awesome semester of learning with you.♥

About your instructor

My name is Leslye Tinson Whitehead and my pronouns are she, her. Please refer to me as **“Professor Whitehead”** or **“Dr. Whitehead”**. I am a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology and in the Department of African American Studies at SJSU. I have been teaching at SJSU since 2015 and enjoy meeting new students and helping you as you make progress in your educational journey. I teach undergraduate courses on race and gender, clinical psychology, and writing. I also teach graduate-level clinical mental health courses.

I have a Doctor of Education degree from SJSU and a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology from San Francisco State University. I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in CA, NV, FL, and TX, and I have an active private practice. I will share more about my background and experiences with you on our Canvas website. You may also visit my professional website: www.leslyetinson.com or my [SJSU faculty webpage](#).

How to Contact Me

If you need to contact me directly:

- 1) Send me a message in **Canvas inbox**
- 2) Send me an email at my **SJSU email address**: Leslye.Whitehead@sjsu.edu
- 3) Attend my **office hours** OR
- 4) Request an **appointment** to meet with me at an alternate time.

If you have questions during the course

If you have a question as you are progressing through the semester, please do the following:

- 1) If it is a general question, post it on the **Q&A forum** for our class. I or one of your classmates may be able to help you.
- 2) If it is a personal question (e.g. grades, disability accommodations, etc.), send me a message using the **Canvas inbox** or to my SJSU email: Leslye.Whitehead@sjsu.edu

Office Hours

- **Please set up a meeting with me as soon as you realize you are having difficulty in the class, so we can figure out a solution.** My office hours are for you! You are not “bothering me” by coming to office hours.
- If my scheduled office hour time slots do not work for you, please email me your availability so we can try to schedule an alternative.
- You can [directly book an appointment with me using my Google Calendar](#)
- Due to the location of my residence, I will not physically be available to meet with you on campus, face-to-face. I am happy to have virtual meetings using phone/ video appointments. [All SJSU students, faculty and staff have access to a Zoom account.](#)

Textbooks and Materials

There is one required textbook for our class.

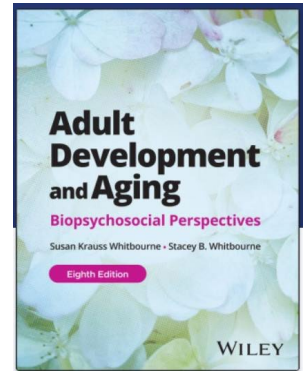
Textbook

Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2025). *Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, 8th Edition*. WILEY.

eText ISBN:9781394223602

Approximate cost: \$38 e-book

[Spartan Bookstore](#); [Vitalsource](#)



Our course textbook will be supplemented with a variety of resources available from our campus library. In order to access these resources, you will need your [SJSU One account login](#) to access the [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library](#) on campus. Some resources are publicly accessible via YouTube, or other public websites. Where possible, these materials are linked directly inside our Canvas course, but other times may require you to use an additional web browser to download a file or document.

Course Learning Goals (CLO)

By completing this class, you will be able to:

- 1) Define ageism and identify ways ageism and other biases against older people show up in our society.
- 2) Review research methods and findings concerning older people.
- 3) Identify social, cultural, and psychological aspects of aging.
- 4) Apply learning to real-life examples.
- 5) Contribute to community based experiences through experiential learning options.

Program Learning Objectives: B.A. Psychology

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology

You will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

2. Research Methods in Psychology

You will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

3. Critical Thinking Skills

You will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

4. Applications of Psychology

You will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

5. Values in Psychology

You will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

How our course is structured

This course will be conducted through weekly virtual class meetings, online discussion forums, required films, and assignments, which you will submit through Canvas on specific due dates. To use Canvas, you will need access to an electronic device such as a computer, and will need to login using their SJSU credentials.

Canvas

Canvas is SJSU's Learning management tool. All of our course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas course website. You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas and your SJSU email address regularly to learn of any updates. **Since this is an online course, Canvas will be the centralized source of course material, communication and supplemental material.** You will also need to use your SJSU Library account to access certain required films in the course.

- [Video: How to Access Canvas \(Canvas Overview\).](#)

Required Computer Equipment

You will need a computer and reliable internet access in order to successfully complete this course. Some of the course material may be accessible by phone or other e-device, but the majority of the course's content may require a full computer/laptop browser and a large bandwidth of data access. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you utilize a full computer or laptop to access all course materials. Computers are available for loan from the campus [Student Computing Services](#).

NOTE: There may be some apps that are incompatible with iPad or Chromebook security settings. In these cases please contact me as soon as possible, so we can try to figure out an alternative.

Need Tech Support???

If you think you need tech support, try these things first:

1. Log out and try to log back in. Restart your computer.
2. Try a different web browser. See if it works in Chrome or Firefox.
3. Maybe a classmate can help! Post your question to our Q&A forum on Canvas.
4. Visit the [Canvas Student Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions.
5. Contact [SJSU IT Help Desk](#) for help
6. Inside Canvas, on the left menu bar, use the help emoji (question mark icon) and submit a trouble ticket.

7. If all else fails, email Professor Whitehead: Leslye.Whitehead@sisu.edu

How do I get help outside of class?

If you have any questions about the class, take the following steps.

1. **Review the [Course Headquarters](#) website.**
2. **Read the syllabus.** Most questions about assignments and requirements are answered in this document. Based on student need, we may make some adjustments to dates as the semester progresses. Be sure to write those new dates on your syllabus.
3. **Visit my [virtual office hours](#).** My office hours are listed on Page 1. All office hours are virtual, using Zoom or Google Meet. You do not need to set up an appointment for office hours. This is my regular time that I will be available to you. If my office hour times do not work for your schedule, we can set up an appointment at an alternate time to meet.
4. **Setup an appointment** – If you want to set up an appointment with me outside of my office hours, please send me an email with your available times and dates. Be sure to include your availability options (at least 2 times and days), as this helps me figure out a time that is best for the both of us.
5. **[Send an email](#) with your specific question** – Please use proper decorum when sending emails. Please do not expect an immediate response. I will do my best to reply to your emails within 48 hours (during the school week, not including holidays and weekends), but I am teaching multiple courses and this timeframe of response may not always be possible. Please use kind words and be respectful in your emails to me. See example emails below.

If you are having trouble in the class, remember:

- I am here to help you
- I expect you to take initiative by coming to see me during office hours **as soon as** you notice having difficulty with course material and assignments.

Please ALWAYS include “Psych of Aging” in the subject line of the email. Example emails are below:

Dear Professor Whitehead: I am in your Psych of Aging class. I have a question about tomorrow’s exam. Can you help me understand the reasoning behind social psychologists’ studies on behavioral compliance? Thanks, Janet M.

Hi Ms. T: I would like to meet but can’t attend your scheduled office hours. Can we set up an alternate time? I’m available Tuesday and Wednesday 3-5pm. Sincerely, Mateo W.

Assignments

Courses are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

Please keep in mind that additional discipline in making sure assignments are completed on time, is the responsibility of the student enrolled in an online course.

Course orientation module (20 points)

- Setup your Canvas profile, add profile picture, and set your notifications **ON**
- Setup your Zoom account, add profile picture, add gender pronouns
- Attend Zoom orientation
- Watch the introduction video on Canvas
- Read the syllabus and Prepare a learning schedule/study plan

Graded Assignments in the Orientation Module

- Submit **Getting to Know You survey** (complete/incomplete grading), 0 points
- Post on the **Welcome discussion board** (Submit using video, or text with photos), 10 points
- **Syllabus Quiz**, 10 points

You are expected to read the syllabus thoroughly and refer to it often during the course. We will have one quiz (administered on Canvas) that will review your understanding of the syllabus policies and course requirements. **Students who do not complete the syllabus quiz by the deadline will receive 0 points on this assignment.**

Weekly Tasks, Activities, or Discussions (100 points)

Each module will have an activity, assignment, or discussion post for you. There will be about 12-15 of these available during the semester. Your “top 10” will be kept and counted toward your final grade in the class. All of these tasks will be available in Canvas, and should be completed there for grading.

Final EXAM: Life History Paper (50 points)

You will have the opportunity to interview someone 65 years or older. Through engaged conversation, this project is intended to inform you of insights related to our course topic. More complete details will be posted in Canvas. **(Due by May 14).**

Resources for locating older adults:

- CHAMP ([Center on Healthy Aging in Multicultural Populations](#))
- [The Institute on Aging, San Francisco](#)
- [The African American Community Service and Activity Center, San Jose](#)

Special Assignment: Kazdin Lecture

The annual [Kazdin lecture \(hosted by the SISU Psychology Department\)](#) series may be scheduled during the Fall semester.

- **Date: March 3rd**
- **Time TBA**
- Students will present a short write-up after the lecture, for up to 10 points extra credit.

Grading for the course

Students will be assigned a letter grade based on the percentage they earned in the course. Letter grades on the Canvas website are not considered official grades. If students have questions about their progress in the course, I strongly encourage you to meet with me during office hours. The table below demonstrates the minimum percentage for each letter grade:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A plus	97%
A	93%
A minus	90%
B plus	87%
B	83%
B minus	80%
C plus	77%
C	73%
C minus	70%
D plus	67%
D	63%
D minus	60%
Fail	Below 60%
Credit	70% or better
No Credit	Below 70%

Determination of Final Grades

- Final letter grades are not rounded up. Percentages on Canvas are not the official grade. Students should refer to this syllabus for the percentage assigned to each letter grade.
- Except in the case of an instructor clerical error, all grades submitted to the University Registrar are final and cannot be changed after the semester ends.
- Petitions for INCOMPLETE are only approved in the rare circumstance of which a student, who is currently passing the class, has completed over 80% of the coursework, and is unable to finish due to an unforeseen emergency.

Classroom Protocols

I have developed a centralized location for all course policies and expectations of students. All course policies and procedures are listed on [Dr. Whitehead's Course Headquarters Website](#). Students are responsible for reviewing this material. The following policies are included, as well as the links to my office hours, and other important course details to help you get started.

- Academic Integrity
- A.I. Resources and Ethical Use
- Attendance (Do I have to attend class?)
- Disability Accommodations
- Diversity Statement
- Student Absences
- Course Incompletes, Withdrawal, and Grade Changes
- Extra Credit
- Final Grades
- Late Work
- Mental Health Support Services
- Major Advising Resources
- Library Resources
- Office Hours
- Online Exams
- Practicing Netiquette
- Zoom Classroom Etiquette
- Zoom Recordings (Will the class be recorded?)

University Policies

This page contains information relevant to all courses at SJSU.

- [General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays](#)
- [Adding and Dropping Classes](#)
- [Attendance and Participation](#)
- [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material](#)
- [Timely Feedback on Class Assignments](#)
- [Workload and Credit Hour Requirements](#)

University Resources for Students

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Peer Connections](#)
- [SJSU Cares](#)
- [Student Technology Resources](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

Class Schedule

The following calendar demonstrates our plan for the semester, but may be subject to change. If substantive changes are made, I will notify the class via Canvas Announcements.

Class Dates	Readings, Topics, Assignments
01/22/2026	<p>Welcome Syllabus Review Discussion #1: Introduce yourself (submit on Canvas by Monday, January 26) Class Topic: What is ageism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Getting to Know You survey (complete/incomplete) • Post on the Welcome discussion board, 10 points • Syllabus Quiz, 10 points
01/27/2026 01/29/2026	<p>Chapter 1: Themes and issues in adult development and aging</p> <p>Reading: APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults (February 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines - Competencies - Resource links to websites related to our course topic
Feb 3, 2026 Feb 5, 2026	<p>Chapter 2: Models of development: Nature and nurture in adulthood</p> <p>Discussion #2: Provide an example of ageism in the media, including a link if available. If the clip is not available, please provide a written description and state why it represents ageism. (Due February 6)</p>
Feb 10, 2026 Feb 12, 2026	<p>Chapter 3: Research Methods</p> <p>Discussion #3: Find an example of a recent (within the past 2 years) research study about aging reported in the media. Include the source of the study's description and then provide your critique of the findings, whether the method, theory, or conclusions. (Due February 13)</p>
Feb 17, 2026 Feb 19, 2026	<p>Chapter 4: Physical Changes</p> <p>Discussion #4: Provide 5 examples of mobility issues you observed while watching an older person in a public setting such as the sidewalk, stairs, crossing the street, using public transportation, or similar situation. (Due February 20)</p>

Class Dates	Readings, Topics, Assignments
Feb 24, 2026 Feb 26, 2026	<p>Chapter 5: Health and Prevention</p> <p>Discussion #5: List at least 5 examples of unhealthy behaviors you have witnessed. Include the behavior, why it's unhealthy, who performed the behavior, and where you observed it. (Due February 27)</p>
03/03/2026 03/05/2026	<p>Chapter 6: Basic Cognitive Functions: Information processing, attention and memory</p> <p>Discussion #6: From the signs and roadways in your neighborhood or frequently traveled routes, please describe 5 potential obstacles that could present problems for older drivers. Some examples include confusing signage, hazardous roadways, or poorly marked pedestrian crossings. In addition to describing the obstacle, please state why you think this will present an obstacle particularly for older adult drivers. (Due March 6)</p>
03/10/2026 03/12/2026	<p>Chapter 7: Higher-Order Cognitive Functions: Intelligence, language, and problem-solving</p> <p>Discussion #7: Find a situation in a public or semi-public place where you are able to observe the way that someone else speaks to an older adult, such as a medical office, store, form of public transportation, or family gathering in which elderspeak occurred. Please provide your responses below based on this observation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the situation in which the elderspeak occurred. 2. What made this elderspeak? What words and/or tone of voice did the individual use in addressing the older adult? 3. How did the older adult respond to this treatment? 4. If you were the older adult in this situation, how would you feel in this situation? 5. Would it ever make sense to correct a person using elderspeak? If so, what approach would you take? <p>(Due March 13)</p>
03/17/2026 03/19/2026	<p>Chapter 8: Personality</p> <p>Assignment: List 5 examples of creative older adults whose work meets the criteria of (1) originality, (2) appropriateness, and (3) lastingness. Add any relevant websites to support your examples and be sure to address all 3 criteria for each example. (Due March 20)</p>

Class Dates	Readings, Topics, Assignments
03/24/2026 03/26/2026	<p>Chapter 9: Relationships</p> <p>Our Grandparents Survey (Due March 27)</p> <p>Please answer these questions with respect to one of your grandparents. If you have no living grandparents, please answer these questions about the one you were closest to when you were younger. If you did not know any of your grandparents, please answer these questions with regard to the "ideal" grandparent you might have known.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which grandparent will you be answering these questions about? How often do you (did you) see your grandparent? Do you (did you) spend time alone with your grandparent with no other family present? Is your grandparent someone you would seek (or sought) for advice? If yes, what type of advice? What do (did) you most like to do with your grandparent? If you can't (or couldn't) see your grandparent in person, how often would you communicate through email, Facebook, or phone? When it comes to (or came to) gift-giving occasions, would your grandparent know what to get for you? Do you know what gifts your grandparent enjoys (or enjoyed)? How do (did) your parent(s) and grandparent(s) get along with each other? Anything else you'd like to say about your grandparent?
03/28/2026 to 04/05/2026	<p>Spring Recess</p> <p>Cesar Chavez Day Observed - March 31</p>
04/07/2026 04/09/2026	<p>Chapter 10: Work, Retirement and Leisure</p> <p>Assignment 10: RIASEC Scavenger hunt: (Due April 10)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take the Online RIASEC Quiz and report your results. Go to O*NET Online and find the description of your ideal job. Briefly summarize what you learn.
04/14/2026 04/16/2026	<p>Chapter 11: Mental Health issues and treatment</p> <p>We will complete Assignment 11: Developing an Advanced Health Care Directive together during class. Full details on this assignment will be available on Canvas.</p>

Class Dates	Readings, Topics, Assignments
04/21/2026 04/23/2026	<p>Chapter 12: Long-Term Care</p> <p>Assignment 12: Review a position paper about the future of Medicare and your suggestions, based on websites that are available on Canvas, for how to maintain its viability and expand healthcare options for older (and possibly younger) adults. (Due April 24)</p>
04/28/2026 04/30/2026	<p>Chapter 13: Death and dying</p> <p>Assignment 12: Please visit the Federal Trade Commission website on planning your funeral. Then answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn about funeral planning that you didn't know before? • How could this information help you or your family in making decisions about funeral planning? (Due May 1)
05/05/2026 05/07/2026	<p>Chapter 14: Successful aging</p> <p>Older adults are, unfortunately, often preyed upon by fraudulent marketers and unscrupulous salespersons. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report in June 2019 provides details and recommendations on Elder Justice. (Elder Justice: Goals and Outcome Measures Would Provide DOJ with Clear Direction and a Means to Assess Its Efforts U.S. GAO) (Due May 8)</p> <p>Please choose one type of fraud and answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. How does this type of fraud operate? Please provide a concrete example. B. What governmental agency or legislation is intended to protect older adults from this kind of fraud? Provide a specific website or be able to reference a federal or state law. C. What advice would you offer an older adult to protect him or her from this type of fraud? D. How can more be done to educate older adults and their families from this type of fraud? E. If applicable, do you know anyone who has been a victim of this type of fraud? Provide a description of what happened, and if/how it was resolved.
FINALS	<p>The final exam for our course is scheduled for:</p> <p>Life History Paper will be due Thursday May 14 at 3:15pm-5:15pm</p>