

## PSY 353 – Adult Development and Aging

Section 1: TTh 9:30 – 10:45, SJ 221

Section 2: TTh 11:00 – 12:15, ZH 104

**Professor:** Dr. Jack Bauer  
**Email:** jack.bauer@udayton.edu

**Office:** SJ 303; meetings by appointment  
**Website:** <https://www.transformativeself.org>

**Required reading:** Bauer, J. J. (2021). *The Transformative Self: Personal Growth, Narrative Identity, and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Recommended reading:** Academic journal articles on topics of your personal interest (e.g., via Google Scholar), plus: (a) Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*, (b) Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*, (c) Ellison, *Invisible Man*, (d) Hesse, *Siddhartha*

### What We'll Study and Why

This course addresses three of adulthood's perennial questions from a developmental perspective:

1. **How do we make sense of our lives?**
2. **What is a good life?**
3. **How do we create one?**

A developmental perspective on adulthood gives the long view of life over time. A developmental perspective on your own life helps you step outside the present moment to see how it was shaped by the past and how it might influence the future. This course challenges you to think about how people change (and stay the same), why they do so, and what all this says about us as humans, individually and collectively. Studying adult development is complex, but only to a degree that is appropriate to the rich dynamics of everyday adult life.

To give a sense of it all: Individual adults have particular genetic dispositions, social influences, and personal idiosyncrasies that shape their lives over time. As for the social influences, we humans live simultaneously in contexts that are interpersonal (family, friends, lovers, coworkers, etc.), cultural, economic, political, religious, educational, commercial, and more—all of which evolve over historical time as we and the generations before and after us live out our daily activities. Plus, we make sense of all this (i.e., our lives) through our subjective interpretations of the past and intentions for the future (sometimes consciously, most times not), notably in our personal narratives and life stories. These subjective narratives *objectively* shape the path of our actual lives—and the lives of others. As if all this weren't complex enough, an individual's adulthood can span several decades, during which time any of these factors may change in various ways, which further affects the development of the other factors. So overall, this course takes an integrative, organismic view that attempts to understand adult life over time in a vibrant context of self-organizing, interrelated, and developmental persons and processes.

My aim for this course is to help cultivate your ability to think about how these forces of development shape our lives—ultimately toward a greater and more humane understanding of a good life for ourselves and others. In addition, this course aims to cultivate your ability to:

- form clear questions about personhood and development within social ecologies
- identify substantiated (especially scientific) sources of knowledge
- constructively discuss and communicate complex ideas about adulthood
- understand and plan your own adult life.

**Course Grading** (Scale: 93-100% = A. 90-92% = A-. 87-89% = B+. 83-86% = B. Etc.)

<i>If you choose NOT to write the film paper:</i>		<i>If you choose to write the film paper:</i>	
Exams (3 @ 100 pts. ea.)	300 pts.	Essays (3 @ 300 pts. ea.)	300 pts.
Idea Journal	100 pts.	Idea Journal	100 pts.
		Optional Film Paper	50 pts.
<b>Total</b>	<b>400 pts.</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>450 pts.</b>

## Reading

You are responsible for reading the day's material *before* the class period and for keeping up with the reading as listed in the course schedule. Please note that you will be tested on reading material that we do not cover in class.

## Exams

Three exams cover the content of the class lectures and readings. If you miss an exam, you must have a legitimate reason by university standards for taking a make-up exam, making every attempt to notify me in advance.

## Idea Journal

To help keep yourself engaged in the reading (and in class), you are to keep an Idea Journal (IJ) that is based on an idea or topic that you find interesting *in the reading*. Each IJ entry should demonstrate that you have thought carefully about your chosen idea from the reading. You may explain your thoughts on the main idea either theoretically or experientially (or both). Theoretically, you might compare the idea from the reading to other theories or bodies of research, or you might imagine a way to study that idea scientifically (in *any* field of study, not just psychology). Experientially, you might explore how a particular idea from the reading might play out or be reflected in adults' actual lives (in work life, in romantic relationships, in family relationships, in friendships, in personal beliefs about life, in leisure activities, in community activities, etc.). Or you might explore how an idea might play out or be reflected in society (in terms of economics, commerce, education, public health, music, literature, film, politics, religion, social policy, gender, race, sexuality, etc.). You might even use an entry or entries for your own personal growth, perhaps to understand your past and/or to plan your future. In any case, each entry should demonstrate (1) that you understand what's going on with the idea you've chosen and (2) that you've expanded on that idea in your thinking.

Each IJ entry should address an idea from the assigned chapter for that day (and/or the day before, if no Idea Journal entry was due then). Each entry should be at least a full paragraph (approximately 200 words or more but no fewer than 150) and is graded out of 10 points. Only your top 10 of the 12 scheduled entries will count, so the total IJ grade is out of 100 points. IJ entries are **due by 5 p.m. on the scheduled dates listed on the Course Schedule (see the IJ column)**. **Submit entries via the link to Google Forms (see the Isidore Resources tool)**. It is your responsibility to keep track of the due dates, regardless of whether I mention it in class.

## Optional Film Paper

The full instructions are posted on Isidore Assignments. But here's a summary: Watch the documentary *56 Up*. (It's on UD Library streaming; see link on Isidore.) The film features interviews of people about their lives every seven years, from ages 7 to 56. You are to write a paper on the film, showing how the film portrays adult development by linking the film to theory or research covered in this course. You have a good deal of latitude in deciding how to approach this paper. The paper should be **4-5 pages**, double-spaced, and is **due by uploading it to Isidore on the scheduled date**. *Note: this is an optional, additional assignment. It's not extra credit.*

**Other Course Policies**

**Electronic devices in class.** You may use electronic devices during class, but only for the purposes of this class—no email, no social media, no non-class-related searches, etc.

**Plagiarism, cheating, and the UD honor pledge.** *Plagiarism or cheating is grounds for getting 0 points on a test or paper, at least.* Remember you have taken UD's honor pledge.

**Assistance with tests, classes, etc.** Please let me know if you would like any form of assistance or accommodations in this class and contact the OLR as needed.

**Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>IJ</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
Aug. 24		Welcome	
26		Intro to adult development	1
Aug. 31	IJ	The cultural ideal of growth	2
Sep. 2		The idea of growth	4 (pp. 100-112)
Sep. 7	IJ	The good life	3
9		The good life	
Sep. 14		<i>No class today</i>	
16	IJ	Growth narratives and a good life story	4 (pp. 112-132)
Sep. 21		Pleasure and happiness in life stories	5
23	IJ	Meaning and growth in life stories	6
Sep. 28		Wisdom and growth in life stories	7 (pp. 193-203 & 221-226)
30	IJ	Love in life stories and cultural master narratives	
Oct. 5		<b>Exam 1</b>	
7		<i>Fall Break</i>	
Oct. 12		Transformative traits, motives, and experiences	8
14	IJ	Meditation and the quiet ego	9 (pp. 281-285)
Oct. 19		Growth in the hard and soft margins of society	10
21	IJ	Growth in the hard and soft margins of society	
Oct. 26		Nature, Nurture, and 'Ndividuality	11
28	IJ	Erikson: Identity development and beyond	12
Nov. 2		Identity development and work life	
4	IJ	Optimal aging: Growth isn't just for the young	13
Nov. 9		<b>Exam 2</b>	
11		Dealing with death	
Nov. 16		Stages of the self	14
18	IJ	Stages of the self	
Nov. 23		Stages of the self	
25		<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Nov. 30		The dark side of growth	15
Dec. 2	IJ	The dark side of growth	
Dec. 7		Self-actualization, authenticity, & self-authorship	16
9	IJ	Self-actualization, authenticity, & self-authorship	
Dec. 15		<b>Exam 3</b> for Section 2 (TTh 11:30 class)	
16		<b>Exam 3</b> for Section 1 (TTh 9:30 class)	
17		<b>Optional Film Paper</b> due via Isidore by noon, Friday	