

**Interventions II: Aging
Psychology 5463
Semester Project**

The goal of this project is to give you an opportunity to examine the literature in an area that appeals to you but that we will not cover in much depth in class. Examples of topics include: the treatment of sleep disorders in older adults, interventions to ensure a smooth transition in retirement, bereavement and its treatment, interventions to enhance medication compliance, memory training, neuropsychological rehabilitation.

The project has two components, a paper and a class presentation. The paper is a review of the theoretical, empirical, and applied literature in the area you choose. You can approach this paper as you would a typical literature review. Make sure that your review includes a range of resources that reflect theoretical writing in the area, empirical evaluations that are relevant, and pragmatic applications that have been attempted. In the process of reviewing that literature you might discuss the following:

Controversies, conflicts, or inconsistencies that exist in the theories that have been proposed in the area. For instance, activity theory and disengagement theory are two models that try to account for behavior in late life, and they have different implications for mental health intervention. You might compare and contrast these two theories and review the literature and your assessment of which theory is best supported by empirical work. You also could discuss aspects of your topic that have not been addressed by contemporary theories.

Intersections between the theories that have been proposed and other elements of psychology or other disciplines that have not yet been brought to bear on the issue. For example, if the expression of emotion is thought to have positive effects on psychological well-being for older adults (e.g., according to Pennebaker), how might feminist theories approach this proposition?

What are the typical research designs employed in this topic area? What are their advantages and limitations? Are there other methodologies you think might be productively applied? What is the best way to evaluate the impact of interventions in this area?

How are these theories and research ideas put into practice? What impact do they seem to have on the lives of actual people? What are the challenges of moving from the laboratory to the community in your topic?

These are only suggestions. Feel free to take the paper in a direction that makes sense to you after reading the literature.

For the class presentation you can discuss some of the issues mentioned above and/or whatever you discuss in your paper. Please distribute 1-2 articles to the class the week prior to your presentation as background reading. And then be prepared to lead the class for 1/2 of our normal class time on the day you present.

Grading for the paper will be based on the comprehensiveness of your review, articulation of your points, and overall grammar, organization, and structure. I anticipate you'll need 12-15 pages to review the literature, but I would rather have a concise, comprehensive paper that is shorter than a longer one that rambles just to make that page length. Grading for the presentation will be based on the organization of your material, thoroughness of your preparation, and communication of ideas to the class. The paper will be a more significant component of your final grade than your class presentation (approximately 66% compared to 33%).