COMILLAS
UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA
CIHS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Psychology Across the Lifespan

COURSE DATA	
Degree	Diploma in Humanities and Global Challenges
Academic Year	2026-27
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	Psychology
Language of instruction	English
Name and email of instructor	Marta Hernández Arriaza mharriaza@comillas.edu

SHORT DESCRIPTION COURSE

Overview:
To acquire understanding of development as a continuous process with its own unique features and themes through the different stages of life.

Utilizing a stage approach, students will learn about human development following a psychosocial framework, therefore focusing more on social and emotional growth, where individual competencies interact with culture, society, family history, relationships and personal experiences.

Students will also gain insight into human difficulties and vulnerabilities throughout the different stages of life.

Conditions for Enrolment:
Although there are no prerequisites for this course, it is recommended that students are enrolled in a degree where they already have some background in psychology (psychology, education or social work).

CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

TOPIC 1: Introduction: Theories of development

TOPIC 2: Foundations of Development: Pregnancy and birth

TOPIC 3: Infancy and Toddlerhood (0–3)

TOPIC 4: Early Childhood (3–6)

TOPIC 5: Middle Childhood (6-11)

TOPIC 6: Adolescence: Transition to Adulthood (11–21)

TOPIC 7: Early Adulthood (21-40)

TOPIC 8: Middle Adulthood (40-65)

TOPIC 9: Late Adulthood and Elderhood (+65)

TOPIC 10: Understanding Death, Dying ad Bereavement

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used throughout this course will include class lectures; active group discussions amongst students where they will be expected to participate in a respectful manner towards their fellow classmates and their opinions; and small group assignments which they will be asked to complete and turn in during class time.

There will also be homework assignments such as researching information, viewing movies and other audiovisual resources, or preparing materials to be presented to classmates.

Furthermore, students are required to submit a final group project, which they must present in class and the completion of a final exam to be held on the last day of class.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
GROUP PROJECT	For the group project, students will interview an elderly person and will give a presentation in the form of a timeline that incorporates what the students have learned in the course.	**30%**
CLASS PARTICIPATION AND MIDTERM	Each student is expected to participate in class with questions, comments, active involvement in discussions, etc. A midterm will take place halfway through the semester to ensure full understanding of the topics that have been covered up until then.	**20 %**

FINAL EXAM	A final exam will take place on the last day of the course during the usual class time. It will consist of no more than 35 questions with three multiple choice answers, of which only one is correct.	**50 %**

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not passing the course in the ordinary assessment period.**

- Tutorials are an essential part of the development of the course, and students may attend tutorials throughout the course. It is recommended that they be arranged in advance with the instructor.

- Any non-face-to-face learning activity that requires the submission of an assignment/document, etc. will be submitted by the student through Moodle, always in PDF format.

- Verified and unjustified absences from **more than one-third** of the class hours taught in each course, calculated for the period from the first day of class until fifteen days before the start of the exam period, may result in the student being barred from taking the exam during the regular exam session of the same academic year (Article 93.1 of the General Regulations). Should this consequence apply, the loss of the right to take the exam may be extended to the special exam session.

- The use of electronic devices such as laptops will be permitted at specific times. The use of cell phones is not permitted during class. Students are expected to follow classroom etiquette, showing respect and tolerance for their peers, the teacher, and the flow of the class (being on time, paying attention, and not interrupting).

- The use of AI to create complete works or relevant parts, without citing the source or the tool or without being expressly allowed in the description of the work, will be considered plagiarism and regulated according to the General Regulations of the University.

- If a student has outstanding courses from previous academic years, and the failure was not due to a loss of academic standing, the requirement will be considered fulfilled. If passing the course requires in-person assessment activities, the instructor will propose alternative assessment procedures to the students.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)		
CONTACT HOURS	OUTSIDE CLASSROOM	OVERALL
60	90	150

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Arnett, J. J. (2024). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. Oxford University Press.

Berk, L. E. (2022). *Development through the lifespan*. Sage Publications.

Bernstein, J. (2020). *The stress survival guide for teens: CBT skills to worry less, develop grit, and live your best life*. New Harbinger Publications.

Boyd, D., & Bee, H. (2019). *Lifespan development*. Pearson.

Garriga, J. (2020). *The good love: When one plus one is more than two*. Sim a Vida Editora.

Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. (2018). *Development through life: A psychosocial approach*. Cengage Learning.

Papalia, D. E., Feldman, R. D., & Martorell, G. (2021). *Experience human development*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Perry, P. (2020). *The book you wish your parents had read: (and your children will be glad that you did)*. Pamela Dorman Books Life.

Samuel, J. (2019). *Grief works: Stories of life, death, and surviving*. Scribner.

Santrock, J. W. (2021). *Life-span development*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Siegel, D. J. (2015). *Brainstorm: The power and purpose of the teenage brain*. Tarcher/Putnam.

Sigelman, C. K., & Rider, E. A. (2022). *Life-span human development*. Cengage Learning.