

## HLTHAGE 3N03 – AGING AND MENTAL HEALTH Winter 2023

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**Lecture:** Mondays 7:00PM-10:00PM,  
ABB 136 or on Zoom (check class  
schedule and A2L announcements).

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6:00PM, or by appointment

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### **Land Acknowledgement**

As part of the course, you will learn about diverse ways of knowing, including Indigenous ways of understanding mental health and connection to the land. The land is foundational in this knowing. Thus, there is a land-based course assignment which weaves together all materials from the course.

### **Territorial Acknowledgement**

As a white settler with Irish ancestry, I recognize and acknowledge the continued colonial violence that takes place on the stolen lands I call home. This violence (with associated colonial oppressive structures) is responsible for transgenerational trauma. The Department of Health, Aging & Society recognizes and acknowledges that we are located on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations. This territory, covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, is within the lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. See the [Calls to Actions](#) from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and learn more about the significance of territorial and land acknowledgements [here](#).

### **Course Description**

This course will examine the mental health of older adults from a variety of perspectives. Key topics include the dual continuum model, changes in cognitive functioning, mental illnesses, assessment protocols, treatment methods, death and dying, Indigenous understanding of mental health, and the emergence of Mad Studies.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Identify several theoretical perspectives of mental health and aging
- Describe the experience of different mental illnesses in the aging population, including the signs and symptoms, assessment protocols and possible treatments
- Use critical thinking to challenge the way in which aging and mental health is represented in society
- Apply diverse ways of knowing (e.g., Indigenous, decolonizing, and Mad Studies perspectives) in the understanding of mental health and aging

### **Required Materials and Texts**

- There is no required textbook
- Any readings/videos/podcasts for the course will be made available on Avenue to Learn and are indicated on this syllabus

## **Class Format**

This class will be delivered in a blended format with lectures and class discussions occurring either in-person or virtually via Zoom. Information about whether we will be meeting in-person or online will be available on the course schedule and/or on Avenue to Learn.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Test 1 – 25%, 24-hour take home Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 7PM – Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 7PM, ET
2. Test 2 – 25%, 24-hour take home Mar 27<sup>th</sup> – Mar 28<sup>th</sup> 7PM, ET
3. Weekly discussions – 10%, due during lecture time (10 in total)
4. Assignment 1: Personal reflection & self-care – 10% due Jan 30<sup>th</sup> by 7PM, ET
5. Assignment 2: Land-mental health connection assignment – 30% due Apr 10<sup>th</sup> 7PM, ET

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Test 1 (25%), Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 7PM – Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 7PM ET (24-hour take home)**

This test will cover material from weeks 1-5. The test will have multiple choice, short answer, and application questions. A copy of the test will be made available through an Avenue to Learn announcement.

### **Test 2 (25%), Mar 27<sup>th</sup> 7PM – Mar 28<sup>th</sup> 7PM ET (24-hour take home)**

This test will cover material from weeks 7-11. The test will have multiple choice, short answer, and application questions. A copy of the test will be made available through an Avenue to Learn announcement.

### **Weekly Discussions (10%)**

Weekly discussion topics to submit each week during lecture time.

### **Assignment 1 (10%), due January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7PM ET**

#### **Personal Reflection Assignment about Aging and Mental Health**

For this reflection assignment, you will be asked to submit a 2-page reflection about your social positionality with the topic of mental health and aging and the self-care practices you will use as you navigate difficult topics in the course. You will self-evaluate your reflection, assign yourself a mark, and write a 1-page rationale for that grade.

More details about this assignment are posted on Avenue to Learn. This assignment is due on Avenue to Learn January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM (ET).

### **Assignment 2 (30%), due April 10<sup>th</sup> 7PM ET**

#### **Land-Mental Health and Aging Connection Assignment**

This assignment is done individually or as a group (of no more than 5 people). The aim is to piece together material from the entire course (cumulative) and understand that there is an intimate connection between land, identity, aging, and mental health.

This assignment has been co-developed with a First Nations artist and art educator born and raised on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. More details about this assignment are posted on Avenue to Learn. The assignment is due to the drop box on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM (ET).

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Comment about course content**

This course will cover difficult topics, such as mental illnesses and aging. I am aware that mental illness and related traumas are complex and unique to the individual and their lived experiences. I will do my best at making you aware of potentially sensitive material through various means (i.e., announcements, during lecture), but sometimes it is not possible to identify everything that could be triggering (Kafer, 2016). I strive for an inclusive teaching and learning environment that encourages you to balance meaningful engagement in course material with the self-care that feels best for you. The McMaster University student wellness website can be found [here](#).

### **Week 1**

#### **Monday Jan 9: Introduction to the course online via Zoom**

Introduction to the course, overview of expectations and assessments, and class discussion about assumptions of aging and mental health.

Assigned Readings:

- Course Syllabus

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

### **Week 2**

#### **Monday Jan 16: Trends in aging and mental health**

What is “normal aging”? What are population trends in aging and mental health?

Assigned Readings:

- Vahia, I. V., Jeste, D. V., & Reynolds, C. F. (2020). Older adults and the mental health effects of COVID-19. *JAMA*, 324(22), 2253-2254.
- Thomas, M. L., et al. (2016). Paradoxical trend for improvement in mental health with aging: A community-based study of 1,546 adults aged 21–100 years. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 77(8), e1019.

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

### **Week 3**

#### **Monday Jan 23: Anxiety and depression with aging**

How to recognize anxiety and depression in the aging population.

Assigned Readings:

- Wolitzky-Taylor, K. B., Castriotta, N., Lenze, E. J., Stanley, M. A., & Craske, M. G. (2010). Anxiety disorders in older adults: A comprehensive review. *Depression and Anxiety, 27*(2), 190-211.
- Spoelhof, G. D., Davis, G. L., & Licari, A. (2011). Clinical vignettes in geriatric depression. *American Family Physician, 84*(10), 1149-1154.

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

**Week 4**

**Monday Jan 30: Cognitive impairment and neurocognitive disorders; Assignment 1 Due**

Overview of cognitive impairments and its comorbidities and diagnostic confusions.

Assigned Readings:

- Alzheimer Society (2016). What is Alzheimer's disease? Available [here](#).
- First person narrative: Janet: <https://ilivewithdementia.ca/janet/>
- First person narrative: Earl: <https://ilivewithdementia.ca/earl/>

Assigned Podcast:

- From Research to Action on 2SLGBTQI & Dementia season 3 episode 37 link [here](#)

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

**Week 5**

**Monday Feb 6: Aging with other mental illnesses**

Overview of other types of mental illnesses and aging (e.g., bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorders, and suicide) will be discussed.

Assigned Reading:

- Conejero, I., Olié, E., Courtet, P., & Calati, R. (2018). Suicide in older adults: Current perspectives. *Clinical Interventions in Aging, 13*, 691-699.

Assigned Video:

- Elyn Saks Ted Talk: link available [here](#)

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

## Week 6

**Monday Feb 13: Test #1**

## Week 7

**Reading Week Monday Feb 20<sup>th</sup> – Sunday Feb 26<sup>th</sup>**

## Week 8

**Monday Feb 27: Mental illness treatments and mental health literacy**  
Overview of mental illnesses and possible treatments and prevention.

Assigned Reading:

- Cummings, S. M., & Kropf, N. P. (2011). Aging with a severe mental illness: Challenges and treatments. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 54(2), 175-188.

Assigned Podcast:

- Addiction and Recovery for Older Adults link available [here](#)

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

## Week 9

**Monday March 6: Aging and mental health from an Indigenous worldview; Overview of land-mental health connection assignment**  
Introduction to Indigenous perspectives on mental health and aging. Land-based connection assignment will be discussed and explained.

Assigned Readings:

- Lavalley, L. F., & Poole, J. M. (2010). Beyond recovery: Colonization, health and healing for Indigenous people in Canada. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 8(2), 271-281.

Assigned Video ([requirement for assignment 2](#)):

- Land-based assignment video, Sky Woman by Lorrie Gallant, First Nations educator (video [here](#); password: land)

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

## Week 10

**Monday March 13: Death and dying**  
Various views on death/dying and grief will be discussed, as well as anxiety about death, and the importance of advanced care planning.

Assigned Readings:

- 'Wind phone' for grief (CBC article available [here](#))
- Nyatanga, B., & de Vocht, H. (2006). Towards a definition of death anxiety. *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 12(9), 410-413.

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

**Week 11**

**Monday March 20: The emergence of Mad Studies; Resilience and aging**

We will explore the emergence of Mad Studies and its intersection with Disability Studies and Aging Studies. The term 'Mad' is a reclaimed word to refer to the experiences of users or former users of mental health services and other people with neurodiverse ways of thinking and feeling. Mad Studies is an evolving interdisciplinary field that offers critical reflection into mental health and madness in ways that foreground the oppression, agency, and perspectives of Mad people, past and present, as well as in diverse cultural contexts, to challenge dominant understandings of 'mental illness.'

Assigned Readings:

- Faulkner, A. (2017). Survivor research and Mad Studies: The role and value of experiential knowledge in mental health research. *Disability & Society*, 32(4), 500-520.
- Ballenger, J. (2017). Dementia: Confusion at the borderlands of aging and madness. In *The Routledge History of Madness and Mental Health* (pp. 297-311). Routledge.

Note: Weekly discussion due during lecture (1%)

**Week 12**

**Monday March 27: Test #2**

**Week 13**

**Monday April 3: Work session on land-mental health assignment online via Zoom**

Note: Weekly discussion due during work session (1%)

## Week 14

**Monday April 10: Land-mental health assignment due by 7PM ET**

### **Course Policies**

#### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted online via the Avenue to Learn drop-box by the deadline noted on the course outline. Generally, your assignment should be typed using Microsoft Word, double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, with 1-inch margins. Ways to format references (if included), among other style requirements can be found in the APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition manual.

#### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

#### **Late Assignments and Tests**

Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances. All late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day (beginning immediately after it's due i.e., 7:01PM). Late tests are subject to a 10% per day penalty (also beginning immediately after it's due i.e., 7:01PM). Late assignments and tests will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences. There will be no redistribution of grade breakdown for missed assignments and tests.

#### **Course Modification**

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g., A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an Online Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g., e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this

disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work**

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### **Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Copyright And Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.