This course will examine adulthood and aging in the context of psychodynamic theory and the life course model of development. The individual is viewed as progressing on a unique developmental trajectory based on historical forces (i.e., economic, political, social), the timing of key transitions (i.e., work, marriage, retirement), and the practical decisions made within these contexts. Life course factors significantly shape the meanings humans attribute to their lives, which are revealed in the clinical setting via the patient's personal narrative, transference, and the broader quest to integrate earlier experiences.

**Goals**

1. To appreciate the complex interaction between psychological, socio-cultural, historical, and biological influences over the life course;
2. To develop an understanding of life course theory and its clinical relevance;
3. To integrate psychoanalytic and social science perspectives on adulthood and aging;
4. To further develop skills in critical thinking and analysis by the practice of group discussion.

**Assignments**

1) **Brief Integration Papers** – Due sessions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, these one-page papers provide the opportunity to examine and apply key themes of adult development and aging. Choosing a minimum of one reading for the week, you will provide a) a brief summary of a developmental concept, theme, or research finding of interest, and b) an application of that idea to a real or hypothetical situation. You may use current or past patients, individuals you've known, and historical or fictional characters from non-fiction writing, novels or movies.

2) **Presentation** – You will present a brief summary and integration (15-20 minutes) of one reading of your choice. You may use current events or trends, personal experiences, case material, fictional characters, or any of the case “subjects” of your brief integration papers to apply the ideas.

3) **Final Integration Paper** – This 6-8 page paper will in a more expanded and in-depth way examine a theme of adult development or aging in the context of case formulation. Using a real or fictional case “subject” of your choice, you will consider: a) How contemporary developmental research and psychodynamic clinical theory contributes to an understanding of this individual; b) How it explains the behaviors, motives, thinking patterns, affect, relationships, etc. that pervade the subject’s current development, and; c) How this person’s experience can inform your clinical work with similar patients.

**Evaluation and Grading**
Oral Participation – 25% of final grade
Presentation – 25% of final grade
Integration Papers – 25% of final grade
Final Paper – 25% of final grade

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1: 1/26 - Perspectives on the Life Course


Class 2: 2/9 - Tasks of Adult Life


Class 3: 2/23 - Partnering & Parenthood


Class 4: 3/9 - Is There a Mid-Life Crisis?


Class 5: 3/23 - More Perspectives on Mid-Life

Class 6: 4/6 - Perspectives on Late Adulthood

Class 7: 4/20 Perspectives on Late Adulthood II

Class 8: 5/4 - Death and Dying