



**Jindal School of
Liberal Arts & Humanities**
India's First Transnational Humanities School

Psychology of Care and Ageing in Society Fall 2026

Update: April 22, 2026

Course Information

1. Course Duration: 15 weeks
2. Credits: 4 credits
3. Course Hours: TBA
4. Location: TBA

Instructors' Information

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Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities

1. Course Description

This course is a project-based course and focuses on two broad topics: (1) decision-making at different ages; (2) wisdom viewed through sociocultural lenses.

Students take the lead on their own research, working across academic literature, media texts, real cases, and interviews. The first project builds skill in drawing evidence from various sources; the second examines existing theories, comparing them with students' own findings. The final examination asks students to reflect on these two topics based on their research projects.

The "Care" in the course title refers to elderly care and runs through the material. In Project 1, it surfaces in how families and clinicians negotiate older adults' choices that appear irrational from the outside. In Project 2, it surfaces in how wisdom gets enacted by older adults, including those who need long-term care.

Central Questions

Project 1: Decision-making at different ages

Teenagers and young adults sometimes make rash, short-sighted decisions and struggle to set boundaries in their own lives or hold a bigger picture. As we move through adulthood, many become more practiced at making reasoned, deliberate choices. And yet in later life, older adults sometimes make decisions that look irrational from the outside, such as refusing treatment, resisting relocation, or narrowing relationships.

Why does decision-making change in this way at different ages? How is autonomy enacted at different life stages?

Project 2: Wisdom viewed through sociocultural lenses

Wisdom has been studied in psychology and aging with different understandings of it. As a psychological trait, it refers to a quality that engages intellectual ability, accumulated knowledge, and lived experience with virtue and sound judgment. But wisdom is also seen differently across cultures and societies. India holds layered understandings across classical texts, folk traditions, the work of modern thinkers, and everyday family and community life.

What aspects of wisdom are salient in India, and how do they relate to and differ from the construct as it has been theorized in Western countries?

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Assessments
<p>After this course, the students will be able to:</p> <p>1. Explain major psychological theories of decision-making across the lifespan, and draw evidence appropriately from cases, academic literature, interviews, and media texts</p>	Reading literature on decision-making, watching relevant videos, analyzing case studies, and participating in class discussions	Project 1; Final Exam
2. Identify aspects of wisdom as they surface in Indian contexts through bottom-up inquiry, and locate these findings in relation to how wisdom has been theorised in psychological research.	Reading literature on wisdom, designing your own research, and individual and group consultations, conducting data collection, and analyzing the data	Project 2; Final Exam
3. Translate psychological findings into accessible public forms, a game-based artifact and a story, adapted to a chosen audience.	Games-as-reflection session, storytelling craft session	Projects 1 & 2
4. Reflect critically on one's own assumptions, intergenerational biases, and development as a student across the semester.	Participating in class discussion, writing reflection throughout the projects	Projects 1 & 2; Final Exam

3. Course Work and Grading Scheme

Component	Weight	Description	Tentative Due
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Project 1: Decision-making across the lifespan	35%	Literature study, youth and older-adult case studies, interviews, an essay, and a game-based reflection.	End of Week 8
Project 2: Wisdom in Indian contexts	35%	Literature study, interviews, or media-text analysis to identify aspects of wisdom in Indian life; one aspect is developed into a public storytelling artifact, and a reflection paper.	End of Week 14
End-of-Term Examination	30%	A written exam in which students reflect on and integrate across both projects, course readings, and their own reflection.	End of Week 15

*Any additional instructions regarding the grading will be provided in class.

Grade Definition

O (80% & Above) [8.0]	Outstanding	Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter; thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles; and, extraordinary critical and analytical ability
A+ (75%-79%) [7.5]	Excellent	Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles; and, critical and analytical ability
A (70%-74%) [7.0]	Very Good	Sound knowledge of the subject matter; excellent organizational capacity; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles; critically analyze existing material; and, originality in thinking and presentation
A. (65%-69%) [6.0]	Good	Good understanding of the subject matter; ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems; and, good critical and analytical skills
B+ (60%-64%) [5.0]	Fair	Average understanding of the subject matter; limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problem; and, reasonable critical and analytical skills
B (55%-59%) [4.0]	Acceptable	Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of study; and, reasonable critical and analytical skills

B- (50%-54%) [3.0]	Marginal	Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials; and, poor critical and analytical skills
F (Below 50%)	Fail	Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills; and, marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course

4. Academic Integrity

Classroom punctuality/conduct:

JSLH conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students should be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. Please show courtesy to your instructors and co-learners by observing punctuality. Please also note that the seminar room is a place for free expression and critical thinking, and this comes with a responsibility on the part of students to respect opinions expressed and actively participate in the group work and the classroom discussions.

Plagiarism:

In line with JGU policy, JSLH operates a zero-tolerance approach to Plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within a student's work is a violation of academic integrity and all reported cases will be investigated before potential disciplinary action. Instructors will address methods of citation and presentation within written work.

Disability Support:

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. The Disability Support Committee (DSC) has identified conditions that could hinder a student's overall well-being. These include physical and mobility related difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health conditions and intellectual/learning difficulties e.g., dyslexia and dyscalculia. Students with any known disability needing academic and other support are required to register with the Disability Support Committee (DSC) by following the procedure specified at <https://jgu.edu.in/disability-support-committee/>

Students who need support may register any time during the semester up until a month before the end semester exam begins. Those students who wish to continue receiving support from the previous semester, must re-register within the first month of a semester. Last minute registrations and support might not be possible as sufficient time is required to make the arrangements for support.

The DSC maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of the student and the nature of their disability and the same is requested from faculty members and staff as well. The DSC takes a strong stance against in-class and out-of-class references made about a student's disability without their consent and disrespectful comments referring to a student's disability.

All general queries are to be addressed to disabilitysupportcommittee@jgu.edu.in

5. Course Material

Project 1: Decision-making at different ages

Heuristic foundation

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Adolescent behavior and risk-taking:

Casey, B. J., Jones, R. M., & Somerville, L. H. (2011). Braking and accelerating of the adolescent brain. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 21–33.

Mills, K. L., Goddings, A. L., Herting, M. M., Meuwese, R., Blakemore, S. J., Crone, E. A., ... & Tamnes, C. K. (2016). Structural brain development between childhood and adulthood: Convergence across four longitudinal samples. *Neuroimage*, 141, 273-281.

Steinberg, L. (2008). A social neuroscience perspective on adolescent risk-taking. *Developmental Review*, 28(1), 78–106.

Ageing cognition and motivated choice

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480.

Baltes, P. B., & Baltes, M. M. (1990). *Psychological perspectives on successful aging: The model of selective optimization with compensation*. In *Successful Aging* (pp. 1–34). Cambridge University Press.

Carstensen, L. L. (2006). The influence of a sense of time on human development. *Science*, 312(5782), 1913–1915.

Gómez-Virseda, C., de Maeseneer, Y., & Gastmans, C. (2019). Relational autonomy: What does it mean and how is it used in end-of-life care? A systematic review of argument-based ethics literature. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 20(1), 76.

Mather, M., & Carstensen, L. L. (2005). Aging and motivated cognition: The positivity effect in attention and memory. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9(10), 496–502.

Peters, E., Hess, T. M., Västfjäll, D., & Auman, C. (2007). Adult age differences in dual information processes: Implications for the role of affective and deliberative processes in older adults' decision making. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2(1), 1–23.

Project 2: Wisdom viewed through sociocultural lenses

Ardelt, M. (2004). Wisdom as expert knowledge system: A critical review of a contemporary operationalization of an ancient concept. *Human Development*, 47(5), 257–285.

Baltes, P. B., & Staudinger, U. M. (2000). Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 122–136

Brugman, G. M. (2006). Wisdom and aging. In *Handbook of the psychology of aging* (pp. 445-476). Academic Press.

Jeste, D. V., & Lee, E. E. (2019). The emerging empirical science of wisdom: Definition, measurement, neurobiology, longevity, and interventions. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 27(3), 127–140.

Zhang, K., Shi, J., Wang, F., & Ferrari, M. (2022). Wisdom: Meaning, structure, types, arguments, and future concerns. *Current psychology (New Brunswick, N.J.)*, 1–22. Advance online publication.

**Any supplementary readings will be shared in class.

6. Session Plan

Week	Topic	Project activity
1	Course overview; what do we mean by “rational”?	<i>Project 1 launch</i>
2	Dual-process and dual-systems theories; heuristics and biases (Kahneman, Ariely)	<i>Annie Duke’s talk screen; literature study; game selection</i>
3	Adolescent development: brain maturation, peer context, reward sensitivity, sensation-seeking (Steinberg)	<i>Youth-case search; media-text analysis</i>
4	Older-adult decision-making: Socioemotional Selectivity, positivity, SOC, values-based choice (Carstensen, Baltes).	<i>Older-adult case search; media-text analysis</i>
5	Research design and ethics; instructor and peer consultations	<i>Research prep; ethics checklist</i>
6	Games as instruments of reflection: decision-making in play	<i>Maria Konnikova’s talk screen; game reflection</i>
7	Working session (essay, games reflection); instructor and peer consultations	
8	Games presentations; Project 1 submission	<i>Project 1 due</i>
9	Wisdom in Western psychology (Baltes & Staudinger, Ardelt, Sternberg, Grossmann, Jeste)	<i>Project 2 launch; literature study</i>
10	Wisdom in India: classical texts, folk traditions, modern thinkers, everyday practice	<i>Method selection; data collection prep</i>
11	Research design and ethics; instructor and peer consultations	<i>Research prep; ethics checklist</i>
12	Working session (analyzing the data)	

Week	Topic	Project activity
13	Working session (crafting public storytelling)	
14	Storytelling performances and screenings	<i>Project 2 due</i>
15	Final exam	

7. Note

This course does not follow a lecture format. The instructor’s role is to provide conceptual grounding, introduce theoretical frameworks, guide methodological preparation, and facilitate discussion. The primary work of the course takes place through student inquiry: students bring ideas, observations, and data into the classroom and work through them together.

The expectation is that students will come up with creative, original ideas for their theory-based activities. The course provides the frameworks and the process; students bring their own curiosity, cultural knowledge, and imagination. The best projects will be those that could genuinely engage people, especially older adults, caregivers, or intergenerational groups, in meaningful ways.

Students are expected to prepare in advance, participate actively, listen carefully to one another, and take responsibility for their own learning. The learning cycle is designed so that each step builds on the previous one; students who engage consistently will find the process cumulative and rewarding.

8. Use of AI in This Course

Students are encouraged to use AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, or similar) as part of their learning process. AI can be helpful for exploring ideas, finding relevant research, improving the clarity of your writing, or brainstorming approaches to your project.

However, AI should be used critically and wisely. It can assist you, but you should not rely on it entirely without checking. AI-generated content can be inaccurate, superficial, or disconnected from the specific contexts you are studying. Your own thinking, observation, and reflection are what make your work meaningful.

When you use AI, always verify the information it provides, especially factual claims, references, and data. If you use AI to help draft or revise your writing, make sure the final submission reflects your own understanding and voice. Any use of AI tools must also comply with the JSLH Anti-Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy.

9. Submission Guidelines

1. Late Submission Penalty:

- A penalty of 5% per day will be applied to all assignments submitted after the deadline, for up to 5 days.
- Submissions more than 5 days late will not be accepted, unless pre-approved by the instructor.

2. Before Submission:

- Technology issues can happen unexpectedly. Save your work in multiple locations (e.g., OneDrive, Google Drive) to avoid data loss due to technical issues.
- If you become unwell and anticipate a delay, please visit the medical center and obtain a medical note for an extension request.

3. After Submission:

- Double-check that you have uploaded the correct file before the deadline. Some students have mistakenly uploaded incomplete or incorrect files in the past. Technical errors will not be considered valid excuses.
 - If you are uncertain, you may email the file to the instructor in addition to uploading it.
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- Please do not submit a link to the document (e.g., from Google Docs or OneDrive), as this will not be accepted. Ensure you upload the document as a file.
 - If you need extra time due to valid reasons, please reach out in advance to discuss possible accommodation.