



Psychology Across the Life Course Cross Elective – Spring 2026

Update: Oct 7, 2025

Course Information

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

Instructors' Information

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1. Course Description

Central Questions

1. What happens to us over time?
2. How do we respond and grow?

This course explores how psychological development unfolds across the life course, how experiences, relationships, and inner attitude shape who we become. It examines how early adversity, social expectations, and individual striving interact to influence health, identity, and meaning.

We focus on key frameworks such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), stereotype embodiment, Adlerian psychology, Stoic philosophy, and flow theory, connecting developmental science with philosophical reflection. Through readings, student-led discussions, and reflective practice, participants will engage with the question of how people adapt, make meaning, and continue to grow throughout life.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain how early adversity (e.g., ACEs) affects long-term development and health.
- Examine the role of internalised stereotypes and societal narratives in shaping the self.
- Apply Adlerian and Stoic perspectives to analyse responses to adversity and life transitions.
- Reflect on and map their own turning points and protective factors.
- Assess strategies for fostering autonomy and meaning across the lifespan.

Course Format

This course follows a **seminar/tutorial model** rather than a lecture format. Each topic spans two to three weeks and combines:

- Short conceptual input from the instructor to ground the discussion, and
- Student-led explorations, where participants present research articles, personal insights, or questions arising from the readings and discussions.

Students prepare in advance, read attentively, listen deeply, and contribute to shared questions and open reflection.

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 how psychological development unfolds across the life course, integrating biological, social, and philosophical perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conceptual inputs• Readings and discussions• Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation (15%)• Final exam (40%)
2. Analyse how early adversity (ACEs) and internalised stereotypes influence identity, health, and adaptation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student research reports on ACEs and stereotypes• Group-led discussion on resilience and bias• Review of empirical literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Block leadership (20%)• Final exam (40%)
3. Apply Adlerian and Stoic principles to interpret life challenges, moral choices, and personal growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings• Reflective dialogue on meaning, control, and virtue• Case application activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective journal (15%)• Final exam (40%)
4. Demonstrate decentering, mindfulness, and reflective awareness in understanding emotional and cognitive processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings and exercises on decentering and compassion• Reflection• Review of empirical literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective journal (15%)• Viva (10%)

5. Evaluate strategies for cultivating autonomy, compassion, and meaning across different life stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and analysis of personal flow experiences Discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective journal (15%) Block leadership (20%) Final exam (40%)
6. Synthesize research and personal insight to construct a coherent understanding of one's own developmental journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration viva Final synthesis session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viva (10%) Final exam (40%)

3. Course Work and Grading Scheme

Component	Weight	Description
1. Seminar Preparation and Participation	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and read articles related assigned theme. Submit a summary of discussion highlights. Engage actively and respectfully in seminar discussions. Assessment is based on preparedness, quality of contribution, and depth of engagement.
2. Block Leadership and Presentation	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work individually or in small groups to lead one thematic block (e.g., ACEs, Stereotype Embodiment, Adler, Stoicism, Decentering/Flow). Introduce key ideas, summarise readings, and guide discussion or an activity. Evaluation focuses on conceptual clarity, creativity, and facilitation skills.
3. Reflective Journal	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a personal learning journal throughout the semester (approx. 1,000–1,200 words). Connect theoretical ideas to personal insights or real-life observations. Demonstrate reflective depth, self-awareness, and integration of concepts. Entries will be assessed for clarity, sincerity, and critical reflection.
4. Integration Viva	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a short oral reflection near the end of the semester. Connect key course concepts to your learning experience. Evaluation is based on integration, articulation, and reflective depth.
5. Final In-Class Written Exam	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written examination held in class at the end of the semester. Covers all major frameworks: ACEs, Stereotype Embodiment, Adlerian Psychology, Stoic Philosophy, Decentering, and Flow Theory. Includes essay-style questions testing comprehension, critical reasoning, and application.

*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. Keywords for Syllabus

1. Life-Course Development

Explores how individuals grow, adapt, and find meaning across different stages of life, shaped by both early experiences and later choices.

2. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Examines how early-life adversity influences health, behavior, and resilience throughout adulthood, highlighting risk and protective factors.

3. Stereotype Embodiment

Investigates how internalised social beliefs—such as age or gender stereotypes—affect identity, motivation, and psychological well-being.

4. Adlerian Psychology

Focuses on Alfred Adler's ideas of purpose, community feeling, and courage, encouraging self-understanding and social contribution.

5. Stoic Philosophy

Applies Epictetus's teachings on control, acceptance, and moral autonomy to understand emotional regulation and personal growth.

6. Flow Theory

Explores the psychology of optimal experience—how deep engagement and intrinsic motivation foster creativity, mastery, and fulfillment.

6. Course Material

Alwin D. F. (2012). Integrating varieties of life course concepts. *The journals of gerontology. Series B, Psychological sciences and social sciences*, 67(2), 206–220.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr146>

Elder Jr, G. H., Johnson, M. K., & Crosnoe, R. (2003). The emergence and development of life course theory. In *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 3-19). Boston, MA: Springer US.

Epictetus. (n.d.). *The Enchiridion* (T. W. Higginson, Trans.). Project Gutenberg. Retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45109>

Kishimi, I., & Koga, F. (2018). *The Courage to Be Disliked: The Japanese phenomenon that shows you how to change your life and achieve real happiness*. Atria Books.

Moen, P. (2001). Constructing a life course. *Marriage & Family Review*, 30(4), 97-109.

**Any supplementary readings will be shared in class.

7. Session Plan

Block	Theme, Focus, and Activities
1. Introduction to Life-Course Psychology	Week 1 Theme: What happens to us over time? Focus: Development as a lifelong process; adversity, growth, and adaptation. Activities: Orientation and mapping personal timelines; Assigning block leadership for upcoming seminar themes.
2. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Week 2-3 Theme: Early adversity and its effects Focus: Risk factors, long-term effects, and protective factors Activities: Student research reports on the ACE concept, prevalence, questionnaire, risk or protective factors related to ACEs.
3. Stereotype Embodiment Theory	Week 4-5 Theme: How beliefs shape ageing and identity Focus: Growth mindsets, Levy's model, and implicit bias. Activities: Student-led research and discussions on cultivating positive mindsets and reducing harmful stereotypes.
4. Adlerian Psychology – The Courage to Be Disliked	Week 6-7 Theme: Self-determination and purpose Focus: Inferiority, community feeling, courage, and social interest. Activities: Read Kishimi & Koga (selected); students apply Adler's ideas to a personal case or fiction/film.
5. Stoic Lessons from Epictetus	Week 8-9 Theme: Control, choice, and freedom of mind Focus: Dichotomy of control, equanimity, and moral autonomy Reading: Read Enchiridion (selected); students apply Epictetus's ideas to a contemporary or personal case.
6. Decentering and Compassion	Week 10-11 Theme: Stepping outside the storm Focus: Psychological flexibility, self-distancing, and compassion Activities: Readings on decentering and compassion; students narrate the interaction between emotions, cognition, and regulation, exploring how to step out from intense experiences.
7. Flow Theory and Lifelong Growth	Week 12-13 Theme: Meaning through engagement Focus: Flow, mastery, and motivation across the life course Activities: Identify personal "flow episodes" and analyse them using Csikszentmihalyi's model; reflective sharing on cultivating engagement and meaning.
8. Integration & Final Reflection	Week 14 Theme: What have we learned about living well? Focus: Integrating research, philosophy, and self-understanding. Activities: Final viva of "Life-Course Map," connecting adversity, growth, and meaning across the semester.
Week 15: End-of-Term Exam	

8. 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.
- ❖ 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 accommodations.

4. Anti-plagiarism and use of AI Policy JSLH

- This course adheres strictly to the JSLH Anti-Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy.
- Students are expected to submit original work. Any use of AI tools must comply with institutional guidelines.