

(PERLS 544)

## **Aging, Health and Active Living**

The Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation  
The University of Alberta

**Hours:** \* 3 (either term, 0 - 3S - 0 )

**Professor:** Sandra O'Brien Cousins, B.P.E., M.P.E.,  
Ed.D., Exercise Gerontology

### **Course Description:**

A broad exploration of the benefits and risks of late life physical activity, as well as life course barriers and incentives to health promotion through active living. Students will have the opportunity to explore topics of personal interest beyond theoretical explanations for active leisure of older adults.



### **Introduction**

The social, biological and cognitive health impact of physical activity and sport is now better understood throughout the life span. Research on late life physical activity benefits is proliferating in journals of kinesiology, leisure studies, physical education and recreation, public health, medicine, gerontological nursing, geriatrics, sports medicine and a variety of sociological and psychological communications. The purpose of this course is to provide students with the support and opportunity to explore a particular area of interest related to older adult physical activity. Shared findings and discussions in the seminar setting will permit an integration of findings on specific topics, promote theoretical understanding, and potentially identify gaps in knowledge and directions for future research.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To bring together the unique perspectives of students from a number of disciplines who are interested in expanding knowledge in role of exercise in enhancing the later years.
2. To explore explanations for sedentary living over the lifespan, integrate available research across disciplines and identify gaps in the research evidence.
3. To appreciate the challenges of research among elderly populations and to develop skills of critical analysis for the research evidence.
4. To explore a thematic area of the student's choice related to the area of aging and physical activity.

## Course Content

This course usually touches on three major content themes:

- 1) Research issues and the elderly: what do students in the class want to know?
- 2) Late life outcomes of physical activity, fitness and sport
- 3) Theoretical explanation of late life activity

The course is normally conducted as a seminar and students are expected to contribute to the discussion as a result of pre-class reading and student-prepared discussions. Interesting discussions occur when we explore the social complexities of what seem to be simple physical intervention studies, and also when we explore biological complexities underlying motivation for physical activity! A charge of \$5.00 will be collected to off-set the costs of class materials. Students should be prepared to spend about the same on preparing class materials for others.

### Proposed Grading Framework for 1999

Assignment 1: Explore a topic	10%	September 29
Assignment 2: Critical reviews	20%	October 13
Assignment 3: First draft ready for blind review	10%	November 3
Blind review #1 completed	10%	November 10
Blind review #2 completed	10%	November 17
Assignment 4: Manuscript and letter to the editor	40%	December 1, 1999

## **Resource Texts**

O'Brien Cousins, S. (1998). Exercise, aging and health: Overcoming barriers to an active old age. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis Publishers, Brunner/Mazel. (Available in the bookstore)

O'Brien Cousins, S. & Horne, T. (1999). Active living among older adults: health benefits and outcomes. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis Publishers, Brunner/Mazel. (Available in the bookstore)

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: the exercise of control. W.H. Freeman Publishers. (Available in the bookstore)

### Supportive Reading

Dr. Cousins' has a bibliographic database in ENDNOTE; searches on various themes are possible on topics related to older adults and physical activity. The database includes over 4,000 citations and is one place to start developing a theme for your report. AGELINE, MEDLINE, SPORTDISCUS and other large databases are available to students in the campus libraries. See Dr. Cousins for more information on ENDNOTE access.

## **Assignment 1:**

Lorenzo=s Oil - Amassing the evidence

10% due September 29

The goal of this assignment is to explore the sources of information for a topic that interests you within the area of physical activity and aging. For example, you may want to explore the role of physical activity in prevention of prostate cancer; you may wonder if sweating in exercise reduces hot flashes during menopause; or you may wonder how researchers actually assess quality of life outcomes in physical activity. By running searches in the library on the larger databases, you will get an idea of how many articles may be of interest to you, and in what journals they may be found. To do this assignment you will need:

1. A topic of interest. Formulate keywords to help your search.
2. Decide which CD-ROM databases you will search.
3. Run a few searches to get a listing of articles (get library help if need be).
4. Select and copy up to 10 abstracts that appear to have relevance to your topic of interest.
5. Prepare a report that summarizes your findings - what you did, what you found, (quantity and quality of material) and what this means for your current confidence in spending more time on exploring this topic. Report submission goes to Dr. Cousins.
6. Be prepared to talk about your findings for 10 minutes during class time.

## **Assignment 2: (20%)**

Analysis of two of the papers from Assignment 1

The goal of this assignment is to sharpen your critical appraisal skills of the available literature.

1. From among the 10 abstracts, select two for further scrutiny.
2. Obtain a copy of each publication - one that appears to be a strong piece of research in which you have confidence in the findings and another that seems weak.. Read them carefully and fill out the appropriate summary sheets provided to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of each study. You will have to decide which type of study you have chosen to review in order to use the appropriate summary sheet:
  - \* intervention (pre-post) study
  - \* epidemiological, large population, one-point in time study (correlational)
  - \* qualitative, non-numerical study
  - \* review / theoretical / meta-analysis
3. Copy your two summary sheets for each member of the class and overview your summaries in class (5 to 10 minutes). Marking will consider in-class presentation and summary sheet submission.

### **Assignment 3:** Draft manuscript (10%)

Students are encouraged to invest time in the exploration of a contemporary topic and production of a well-researched manuscript that has potential for publication. We have had good success in getting student review papers published.

#### **Select a Topic of your choice**

Build your topic around an idea that interests you and one that has merit in terms of consolidating knowledge. You can change topic or build this assignment on the work you have already done (the smart thing to do!). A "bad" choice" is something too general -- such as heart disease and physical activity. You can narrow a broad topic like that by considering gender issues or a specific aspect of the topic. Example: *Are older women more worried about osteoporosis than hear t disease? What is the evidence?* Or you can set up a topic nicely by exploring a less obvious health issue topic like: "Prostate cancer and physical activity" or "The benefits of active living for Multiple Sclerosis." These kinds of issues probably have limited published support, but on the other hand, 8 or 10 papers can provide a tantalizing amount of evidence to suggest that a review of the evidence would be valuable. Use the writing style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 1994. A maximum of 20 pages, (one inch margins with 12 point font) including the references is recommended for journal acceptance. Use Active Living Among Older Adults (1999) for ideas on content that need further study.

Draft due: November 3 (10%)

#### **Peer Reviews: 30%**

To do blind reviews, we need to have working documents! That means we need a paper submission on time so that blind reviews can be conducted in a timely manner. Each student can expect two blind reviews. Each member of the class will perform two blind reviews. At least one paper will be from a member in the class; another paper may be from an authentic journal submission. The goal of this assignment is: 1) to get detailed feedback on your own review manuscript, and 2) to develop an experience as a peer reviewer. Use the Author Feedback and Editor=s Recommendation forms from the Journal on Aging and Physical Activity to guide your review strategy. We will discuss the blind review process further in class. Worth 10% per review.

### **Assignment 4: Revised Manuscript**

Final revised paper due: December 1, 1999 (30%)

## **Things to Consider in Manuscript Writing**

Successful article writing depends on:

- \* contemporary nature of the topic
- \* Logical flow of the paper (see APA for advice)
- \* proper format (1 inch margins, headings, double space etc.)
- \* brief, accurate descriptive title
- \* A 100 word abstract that states the purpose of the manuscript, method and findings.
- \* Adequate references (at least 8)
- \* APA referencing style (unless you know which journal you wish to have review your work)
- \* Correct grammar
- \* Headings and paragraphs that organize the paper into an introduction, methods, results, discussion and conclusions / implications for future research
- \* Proper sentence structure
- \* Summary tables if possible
- \* Ideas flow from one sentence to the next
- \* Each paragraph makes a point; each sentence has clear meaning
- \* Evidence is critically presented; weak and strong studies are noted
- \* Evidence from high-quality journals add credibility to your content
- \* Use recent citations (1990-1999) as much as possible; some classic work is also appropriate.
- \* Conclusions must be logically derived from the evidence collected
- \* Use quotes to make important points and add variety to the paper

### Locating Artivles

Obtain and review ORIGINAL papers and do not rely on indirect sources and secondary citations. Using the CD-ROM system in the libraries, conduct a keyword search for words pertinent to your topic. Ask the library staff to assist you or take instruction from the available workshops available to students. Decide which databases will be most useful to search (MEDLINE, AGELINE, SPORTDISCUS, ERIC, PSYCHLIT, SOCIOFILE). You can download your finds to disk, print to your email, or print in the library.

### Critical Analysis and First Draft

Your paper should critically review about 8 scientific articles pertaining to your theme. To assist with the summary of information, tables can be used to extract information or lack thereof. If you do tables, you may wish to include them in your paper in some way. Get a draft copy unerway as soon in the term as possible, and build on it, edit and revise from time to time. The peer review comments usually offer tremendous assistance on your strengths and weaknesses.

### Rewriting and Final Draft

Your reviewer(s) will have some suggestions for you. Try to address each and every concern. Write a letter to the "editor: explaining what you did to incorporate every comment or suggestion. If you did not like a recommendation, and did not use it, then explain why to the "editor". Let the paper "rest" for a week and revisit it to check everything over. Are the words saying exactly what you intended? If not,

play with other ways to say the same thing. Prepare any last changes and hand in your final draft (print one for yourself as a backup). Think about what journal might be interested in actually reviewing your manuscript!

### Class Schedule Fall 1999

- September 15      Get to know you and your interests, Scope of the course. *Critical assessment of a research study*. Work on Morey et al. (1999) paper in class. Binder et al. (1999) paper for homework.
- September 22      Review Binder paper and discuss scope of research issues and evaluation criteria in Active Living Outcomes Among Older Adults (1999). *What is strong evidence?*
- September 29      Discussions on findings (Assignment 1)  
*Determinants of late life exercise*. Exercise, Aging and Health. (1998)
- October 6            *A Self-talk model of older adult exercise behavior*.  
A composite model and constructs worth exploring.
- October 13          *Triggers: What gets people started or restarted into being active?*  
Assignment 2 presentations. Discuss manuscript preparation!
- October 20          *Issues of locus of control and age stereotyping*. *Cultural and environmental efficacy?*
- October 27          *Social influences big and small*. (Chogahara paper)
- November 3          Draft of paper ready for peer reviews. *Efficacy and active living for older adults*. *What does age and gender have to do with it?* (Vertinsky paper)
- November 10        Blind review #1 due. *Seniors Say the Darndest Things about Physical Activity*. *Dealing with mixed messages in interviews*.
- November 17        Blind Review #2 due. *Andropause and Menopause*. *The Amiddle agers@ - what about boomer aging?*
- November 24        Informal discussions of 2 or 3 student papers. Manuscript revision and writing the Letter to the Editor@.
- December 1          Informal discussions of 2 or 3 papers.

December 8            Last day of class. Informal discussions of 2 or 3 student papers.  
Manuscript due!