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America is graying faster than our knowledge base for late life issues. Teaching applied Clinical Gerontology gives me an opportunity to prepare undergraduate and graduate students to meet the dynamic social challenges that we face as a society. I stress that the challenges ahead are complex and that only through an understanding of biological, psychological, and social processes will we appreciate old age. I believe that Psychology stands in the middle, bridging the gap between the biological organism and the social context within which aging occurs. The Psychology classes I teach are evidence of this model.

Mental health and aging (Psyc646/844) is my foundations course that reviews current research and mental health applications designed specifically for older adults. We discuss theoretical perspectives appropriate for understanding mental health issues with increased age. One dominant theme is distinguishing healthy versus unhealthy aging processes and students learn about cross-sectional versus longitudinal research, models of individual differences and how those differences are expressed through time (i.e., intraindividual change). We also survey the epidemiology, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment methods associated with a variety of mental health conditions. Finally, we examine the community mental health resources available for older adults and discuss practice-related issues such as evaluation of functional independence and competency among older adults. **Behavioral pharmacology** (Psyc644/843) addresses psychological and behavioral effects of drugs, including psychotropic medications. A central theme is that effects of drugs frequently cannot be characterized solely from a pharmacological perspective. Thus, we examine the interaction of pharmacological and behavioral variables. For example, how do psychological factors moderate physiological responses to drugs? To address these issues we explore the intersection of general psychology, research methods, biology, chemistry, neurophysiology, and neural systems. At the end of the course students understand how behavioral and environmental factors can influence the effects of drugs. Students become critical and informed consumers of information and research about drugs and behavior. In a world of growing dependence on psychotropic medications, students gain basic skills to seek information related to behavioral pharmacology. **Neuropsychology across the lifespan** (Psyc863) is the capstone course I teach. It reviews neural development and the brain-behavior relationships in intact, injured, and diseased brain systems, detailing basic issues in clinical assessment and reporting of cognitive impairment resulting from developmental disorders, stroke, traumatic brain injury, and brain-disease. Selected topics include perception, speech, memory/dementia, judgment, and attention. Several lectures provide special focus on early development and gerontological assessment issues. Graduate students learn about the cognitive effects of damage to different brain systems and landmark syndromes through case studies throughout the history of neuropsychology. Through the course, students understand the principles and limits of cognitive neuropsychology, and how to present information about brain disorders to a lay audience. Students also come to understand how neuropsychologists construct theory-based neuropsychological batteries, rule out diagnoses, and make specific and practical clinical recommendations.

What excites me most about teaching is that it is a 2-way street. Student-professor dialogues inform my research by keeping me focused on the most germane and informative clinical issues. For example, through teaching my graduate students in the Neuropsychology course, I have been able to integrate cutting edge neuropsychological diagnostic processes and redirect some of my own research in prose recall to include new theories of reasoning and functional health in late life. Integrating my research interests with my teaching topics keeps the material fresh and my enthusiasm spills over in the class and motivates the students. It links the didactic to the practical. I also am fortunate in that my research laboratory has a very high success rate for recruiting, maintaining, and graduating undergraduate research assistants from these courses.