



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Loneliness and Social Isolation: Research in the Older Population - 3211*

*Last update 30-01-2024*

*HU Credits: 4*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: Social Work*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: Yearly*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Sharon Shiovitz-Ezra*

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*Coordinator Office Hours: Thursday, 10:00-11:00*

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Teaching Staff:

Prof Sharon Shiovitz-Ezra

Course/Module description:

Various studies have found that loneliness has significant implications for mental, cognitive and physical health. Hence it is important to conduct research on loneliness and social isolation and enhance knowledge of the topic among therapeutic agents and researchers. In this research seminar, students will be exposed to the theoretical and empirical literature on loneliness at different stages of the individual and family life cycle in routine and pandemic periods. In addition, various ways of measuring loneliness and social isolation will be examined in light of current and early empirical literature. Based on the research literature, the students will conduct an empirical examination of a specific research question which deals with factors that predict loneliness or, alternatively, with the impact of loneliness on various areas of life (e.g., the contribution of loneliness to exacerbating depression and anxiety in old age).

Course/Module aims:

Main aim: To conduct an independent study based on an individual research question.

-To prepare the students to write a research proposal (interim project), to conduct a research fully and to write a full research report (final project).

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1.Independent selection of a research question
- 2.Writing a research proposal
- 3.Collecting data independently
- 4.Analyzing data in light of the research question / research hypotheses
- 5.Writing a full research report.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures  
personal mentoring

Course/Module Content:

The first cluster of lessons will be devoted to providing the theoretical and

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empirical foundation for examining loneliness and social isolation. The lessons will be divided as follows: An experiential encounter with the sense of loneliness; a discussion of different definitions of loneliness; a review of theoretical approaches and empirical research on loneliness. Reviewing the literature on loneliness and social isolation among the older population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second cluster of lessons will deal with measuring loneliness, presenting the research instruments, and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the different instruments.

The third cluster of lessons will focus on each student's specific topic of research. Personal sessions will be scheduled with the students, and will focus on the following aspects:

- The research question
- The research population
- The research instrument
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Presentations of findings

#### Required Reading:

Cluster 1: Loneliness in theory and research

Andersson, L. (1998). Loneliness research and interventions: A review of the literature. *Aging & Mental Health*, 3, 264-274.

Antonucci, T., & Akiyama, H. (1991). Social relationships and aging well. *Generations*, 15(1), 39-50.

Asher, S. R. & Paquette, J. A. (2003). Loneliness and peer relations in childhood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12, 75-78.

Bowling, A. (1994). Social networks and social support among older people and the implications for emotional well-being and psychiatric morbidity. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 6(1), 41-79.

Cacioppo, J. T., Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., Hawkley, L. C., & Thisted, R. A. (2006). Loneliness as a specific risk factor for depressive symptoms: Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. *Psychology and Aging*, 21(1), 140-151.

Carstensen, L. L. (1987). Age-related changes in social activity. In L. Carstensen & B. Edelstein (Eds.), *Handbook of clinical gerontology* (pp. 222-237). New York: Pergamon Press.

Carstensen, L. L. (1991). Selectivity theory: Social activity in life-span context. In K. W. Schaie (Ed.), *Annual review of gerontology and geriatrics* (vol. 11, pp. 195-217). New York: Springer.

Caspi, A., Harrington, H., Moffitt, T.E., Milne, B.J., & Poulton, R. (2006). Socially isolated children 20 years later: Risk of cardiovascular disease. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 160(8), 805-811.

Cutrona, C. E. (1982). Transition to college: Loneliness and the process of social adjustment. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 291-309). New York: A Wiley-Interscience

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Publication.

Danese, A., Moffitt, T.E., Harrington, H., Milne, B.J., Polanczyk, G., Pariante, C.M., . . . Caspi, A. (2009). Adverse childhood experiences and adult risk factors for age-related disease: Depression, inflammation, and clustering of metabolic risk markers. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 163(12), 1135-1143.

De Jong Gierveld, J. (1987). Developing and testing a model of loneliness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(1), 119-128.

De Jong Gierveld, J., Broese van Groenou, M., Hoogendoorn, A. W. and Smit, J. H. (2009). Quality of marriages in later life and emotional and social loneliness. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 64B, 4, 497-506.

Dykstra, P. A. (1995). Loneliness among the never and formerly married: The importance of supportive friendships and a desire for independence. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 50(5), S321-S329.

Dykstra, P. A., & Fokkema, T. (2007). Social and emotional loneliness among divorced and married man and women: Comparing the deficit and cognitive perspectives. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 29(1), 1-12.

Green, L. R., Richardson, D. S., Lago, T., & Schatten-Jones, E. C. (2001). Network correlates of social and emotional loneliness in young and older adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 281-288.

Havens, B., Hall, M., Sylvestre, G., & Jivan, T. (2004). Social isolation and loneliness: Differences between older rural and urban Manitobans. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 23(2), 129-140.

Hawkley, L. C., Burleson, M. H., Berntson, G. G., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2003). Loneliness in everyday life: Cardiovascular activity, psychosocial context, and health behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(1), 105-120.

Hawkley, L. C., Masi, C. M., Berry, J. D., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2006). Loneliness is a unique predictor of age-related differences in systolic blood pressure. *Psychology and Aging*, 21(1), 152-164.

Holmen, K., Ericsson, K., Andersson, L., & Winblad, B. (1992). Loneliness among elderly people living in Stockholm: A population study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 17, 43-51.

Holmen, K., & Furukawa, H. (2002). Loneliness, health and social network among elderly people - A follow-up study. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatric*, 35, 261-274.

Jylhä, M. (2004). Old age and loneliness: Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses in the Tampere Longitudinal Study on Aging. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 23(2), 157-168.

Kim, O. (1999). Predictors of loneliness in elderly Korean immigrant women living in the United States of America. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 29(5), 1082-1088.

Lee, G. R., & Ishii-Kuntz, M. (1987). Social interaction, loneliness, and emotional well-being among the elderly. *Research on Aging*, 9(4), 459-482.

Marangoni, C., & Ickes, W. (1989). Loneliness: A theoretical review with implication for measurement. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 6, 93-128.

Mullins, L. C., & Elston, C. H. (1996). Social determinants of loneliness among older

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- Americans. *Genetic, Social & General Psychology Monographs*, 122(4), 453-473.
- Mullins, L. C., Tucker, R., Longino, C. F. Jr., & Marshall, V. (1989). An example of loneliness among elderly Canadian seasonal residents in Florida. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 44(2), S80-S86.
- Penninx, B. W., van Tilburg, T., Kriegsman, D. M., Deeg, D. J., Boeke, A. J., & van Eijk, J. T. (1997). Effects of social support and personal coping resources on mortality in older age: The Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 146, 510-519.
- Peplau, L. A., Bikson, T. K., Rook, K. S., & Goodchilds, J. D. (1982). Being old and living alone. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 327-347). New York: A Wiley-Interscience Publication.
- Peplau, L. A., Miceli, M., & Morasch, B. (1982). Loneliness and self-evaluation. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 135-151). New York: A Wiley-Interscience Publication.
- Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (1982). Perspectives on loneliness. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 1-18). New York: A Wiley-Interscience Publication.
- Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. A. (1982). Theoretical approaches to loneliness. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 123-134). New York: A Wiley-Interscience Publication.
- Pinquart, M. (2003). Loneliness in married, widowed, divorced, and never-married older adults. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 20(1), 31-53.
- Pinquart, M., & Sörensen, S. (2001). Influences on loneliness in older adults: A meta-analysis. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 23(4), 245-266.
- Prince, M. J., Harwood, R. H., Blizard, R. A., & Thomas, A. (1997). Social support deficits, loneliness and life events as risk factors for depression in old age: The Gospel Oaks Project VI. *Psychological Medicine*, 27, 323-332.
- Qualter, P., & Munn, P. The separateness of social and emotional loneliness in childhood. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 43(2), 233-244.
- Qualter, P., Brown, S.L., Munn, P. & Rotenberg, K. J. (2010). Childhood loneliness as a predictor of adolescent depressive symptoms: An 8-year longitudinal study. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 19(6), 493-501.
- Rokach, A. (2000). Loneliness & the life cycle. *Psychological Reports*, 86, 629-642.
- Rokach, A., & Neto, F.L. (2005). Age, culture and the antecedents of loneliness. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 33(5), 477-494.
- Rotenberg, K. J., & Hymel, S. (1999). *Loneliness in childhood and adolescence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Parkhurst, J. T. & Hopmeyer, A. (1999). Development change in the sources of loneliness in childhood and adolescence: Constructing a theoretical model.
- Terrell-Dentsch, B. (1999). The conceptualization and measurement of childhood loneliness.
- Savikko, N., Routasalo, P., Tilvis, R. S., Strandberg, T. E., & Pitkälä, K. H. (2005). Predictors and subjective causes of loneliness in an aged population. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatric*, 41(3), 223-233.
- Sorkin, D., Rook, K. S., & Lu, J. L. (2002). Loneliness, lack of emotional support, lack

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of companionship, and the likelihood of having a heart condition in an elderly sample. *Annual Behavioral Medicine*, 24(4), 290-298.

Stravynski, A., & Boyer, R. (2001). Loneliness in relation to suicide ideation and parasuicide: A population -wide study. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 31(1), 32-40.

Theeke, L. A. (2007). *Socidemographic and health-related risks for loneliness and outcome differences by loneliness status in a sample of older U.S. adults*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, West Virginia University, West Virginia.

Tiikkainen, P., & Heikkinen, R. L. (2005). Associations between loneliness, depressive symptoms and perceived togetherness in older people. *Aging & Mental Health*, 9(6), 526-534.

Tijhuis, M. A. R., De Jong Gierveld, J., Feskens, E. J. M., & Kromhout, D. (1999). Changes in and factors related to loneliness in older men. *The Zutphen Elderly Study*. *Age and Ageing*, 28, 491-495.

Victor, C. R., Scambler, S. J., Bond, J., & Bowling, A. (2000). Being alone in later life: Loneliness, social isolation and living alone. *Review in Clinical Gerontology*, 10, 407-417.

Victor, C. R., Scambler, S. J., Bowling, A., & Bond, J. (2005). The prevalence of, and risk factors for, loneliness in later life: A survey of older people in Great Britain. *Ageing & Society*, 25, 357-375.

Weiss, R. S. (1973). *Loneliness: The experience of emotional and social isolation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Weiss, R. S. (1987). Reflections on the present state of loneliness research. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 2, 1-16.

Wenger, G. C., & Burholt, V. (2004). Changes in levels of social isolation and loneliness among older people in a rural area: A twenty-year longitudinal study. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 23(2), 115-127.

#### Cluster 2: Measurement issues

De Jong Gierveld, J., & van Tilburg, T. (2006). A 6-item scale for overall, emotional, and social loneliness: Confirmatory tests on survey data. *Research on Aging*, 28, 528-598.

Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., Hawkey, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2004). A short scale for measuring loneliness in large surveys: Results from two population-based studies. *Research on Aging*, 26(6), 655-672.

Russell, D. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (version3): Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 66(1), 20-40.

Russell, D., Peplau, L. A., & Cutrona, C. E. (1980). The revised UCLA Loneliness Scale: Concurrent and discriminate validity evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(3), 472-480.

#### Additional Reading Material:

Emerson, K. G. (2020). Coping with being cooped up: Social distancing during COVID-19 among 60+ in the United States. *PAHO*, 44, <https://doi.org/10.26633/RPSP.2020.81>

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Hawkley, L. C., Masi, C. M., Berry, J. D., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2006). Loneliness is a unique predictor of age-related differences in systolic blood pressure. *Psychology and aging*, 21(1), 152.

Hoffart, A., Johnson, S. U. and Ebrahimi, O. V (2020) 'Loneliness and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic: Risk factors and associations with psychopathology'. *PsyArXiv*. 10.31234/osf.io/j9e4q

Killgore, W. D. S. et al. (2020) 'Loneliness: A signature mental health concern in the era of COVID-19', *Psychiatry Research*. Elsevier, p. 113117.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113117>

Kivi, M. et al. (2020). Up and about: Older adults' wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic in a Swedish longitudinal study. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, gbaa084, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa084>

Losada-Baltar, A. et al. (2020) "'We're staying at home". Association of self-perceptions of aging, personal and family resources and loneliness with psychological distress during the lock-down period of COVID-19', *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa048>

Luchetti, M. et al. (2020). The Trajectory of Loneliness in Response to COVID-19. *American Psychologist*. Advance online publication.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000690>

#### Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %

Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture/ Seminar / Pro-seminar / Research proposal 30 %

#### Additional information: