“How old would you be if you didn’t know how old you were?” —Satchel Paige, baseball player

**Professor:** Dr. Alan Castel, Department of Psychology, castel@ucla.edu

**Seminar Summary:**
As we age, we accumulate knowledge and wisdom, but may be more forgetful. Most people think of aging in a negative way, and in terms of declines. However, there are many stereotypes about aging that are not true. While some things may decline in old age, a better description of aging involves changes, and not simply decline. Our attitudes about aging can influence how well we age. People often report feeling younger than their chronological age, and there are many things we can do to stay sharp in older age. This seminar will cover topics such as happiness, memory, brain training, wisdom, humor, habits, retirement, and what constitutes successful aging. We will discuss cognitive, social, and emotional changes that happen with age, how people live and learn, focus on what is important, achieve balance, and get better with age. Also, in celebration of UCLA’s 100th birthday, we will discuss how people with connections to UCLA (John Wooden, Jackie Robinson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jared Diamond, Frank Gehry) have influenced what it means to age well, and how to be successful at aging.

**Seminar Structure:**
We will discuss topics related to aging based on relevant readings and research. Students will have the opportunity to participate in demonstrations, discussions, and think about future questions regarding how humans can and do age well. Students are expected to read one (short) book chapter each week, and come to the seminar with insight, questions for discussion, and participate in discussion. Students will complete two short writing assignments (2 pages each), about a topic of interest related to successful aging. At the end of the seminar, everyone will learn something new about the growing field of successful aging (as we are all aging!)

**Readings:**
The weekly readings will be from a recent book on successful aging, which provides a state-of-the-art review of topics related to successful aging, with insight from interviews of older people, as well as short articles. Thus, the readings will allow for the access of knowledge and provide material for discussion. Student will read one chapter each week from this recent book:


**About the Professor:**
Alan Castel is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He studies learning, memory, and aging. He is interested in how younger and older adults selectively remember important information. He lectures internationally to people of all ages, and has received several teaching awards. His research has been featured in the New York Times and Time Magazine. He received his PhD from the University of Toronto, did a fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis, and has been on faculty at UCLA since 2006.

“I will never be an old man. To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am.”—Francis Bacon, English philosopher, scientist, and author
Learning Objectives:
• Students will gain a deeper understanding of the changes that happen with age
• Students will debate and discuss what is needed to engage in successful aging
• Students will appreciate the diversity of changes associated with aging
• Students will discuss and develop new perspectives on how we will age in the future

Interested Students:
More people are living longer, and older adults will outnumber younger adults, so it is important to know how we can age well. This class is designed for students interested in Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Science, Lifespan Development, Gerontology, and related disciplines. The class would be most relevant to people who are interested in pursuing the fields of medicine, basic and applied science, law, gerontology, clinical or social work, and other related fields. We all experience the process of aging, and a better understand can help everyone.

Class Schedule and Thought-Paper Due Dates:

Week 1:
Introduction and Models (and Mentors) of Successful Aging
Readings: Chapter 1 (What is Successful Aging?) and Kaplan (2018) “Pessimism about old age may be a risk factor for dementia” Los Angeles Times.

Week 3:
Emotional Regulation and Cognitive Development
Readings: Chapter 2 (Happiness and Mood Regulation) and Kluger (2018) “Why you can look forward to being happier in old age” Time Magazine.

Memory and Cognition
Readings: Chapter 3 (Memory Selectivity) and Castel (2009) “Memory and Successful Aging: A Conversation with Coach John Wooden” APS Observer.

Week 5 (Thought-paper #1 due, submit via Turnitin by the end of Week 6):
Wisdom, Creativity and Brain Training
Readings: Chapter 4 (Wisdom and Creativity)
Readings: Chapter 5-6 (Staying Sharp and Brain Training)

Week 7:
Habits and Rewiring
Readings: Chapter 7-8 (Habits, Hobbies, and Retirement) and Kadlec (2014) “2 Secrets to Having a Happy Retirement” Time Magazine.

Week 9: (Thought-paper #2 due, submit via Turnitin by end of Week 10)
Revisiting Models of Successful Aging
Readings: Chapter 9 (Start Successful Aging Now)

“Whatever you do in life, surround yourself with smart people who will argue with you.”
—John Wooden