Subject:	ALH
Course Number:	506
Descriptive Title:	Brain Fitness for Older Adults
Division:	Library and Learning Resources
Department:	Emeritus
Course Disciplines:	Health, Psychology
Catalog Description:	This noncredit course helps older adults strengthen memory, focus, and mental flexibility through brain fitness strategies and exercises. Students will explore how memory works, identify factors that affect brain health, and apply internal and external memory techniques to improve everyday recall. Activities include memory challenges, mental exercises, and personal goal-setting to support cognitive wellness and lifelong learning. The course is designed to promote self-awareness, mental stimulation, and practical skills for enhancing brain function in daily life.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	1
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	2
Total Course Hours:	18
Course Units:	0
Grading Method:	No Grade
Credit Status:	Noncredit
Transfer CSU:	No
Effective Date:	
Transfer UC:	No
Effective Date:	
General Education ECC:	
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	
Term:	
Other:	
IGETC:	
Term:	

Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: 1. identify one physical, one psychological, and one environmental factor that can affect memory and cognitive function. 2. describe, in simple terms, how memory works and how it changes with age. 3. demonstrate the use of at least two internal memory techniques (e.g., association, visualization, chunking) to support memory recall.
Course Objectives:	1. Explain the basic functions of short-term, long-term, and working memory. 2. Identify lifestyle factors—such as diet, exercise, sleep, and stress—that influence brain health. 3. Recognize age-related changes in memory and distinguish them from signs of cognitive decline. 4. Use external memory aids (e.g., calendars, lists, reminders) to support daily memory tasks. 5. Practice internal memory techniques such as visualization, association, and repetition. 6. Develop a personal brain fitness plan incorporating cognitive exercises and healthy habits. 7. Reflect on individual memory challenges and set realistic goals for cognitive improvement.
Major Topics:	**I. Introduction to Brain Fitness (lecture)** A. Course overview and personal goals B. Common memory concerns in aging C. Myths and facts about memory and aging **II. How Memory Works (lecture)** A. Types of memory: short-term, long-term, working B. How the brain processes and stores information C. Normal age-related memory changes vs. cognitive impairment **III. Factors That Affect Brain Health (lecture)** A. Physical factors (nutrition, exercise, sleep) B. Psychological factors (stress, emotions, motivation) C. Environmental influences (noise, routines, organization) **IV. External Memory Strategies (lecture)** A. Using calendars, lists, and alarms B. Organizing personal space and routines C. Setting up memory-supportive environments **V. Internal Memory Techniques (lecture)** A. Visualization and association B. Chunking and categorization C. Repetition and rehearsal **VI. Brain Fitness Exercises and Mental Stimulation (lecture)** A. Word games, puzzles, and logic challenges

	B. Creative activities and learning new skills C. Group activities and discussion-based recall **VII. Developing a Personal Brain Fitness Plan (lecture)** A. Identifying strengths and challenges B. Setting realistic cognitive goals C. Tracking progress and adjusting strategies **VIII. Review and Reflection (lecture)** A. Sharing experiences and successful techniques B. Final reflections on course learning C. Planning for continued brain wellness
Total Lecture Hours:	18
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	18
Primary Method of Evaluation:	3) Skills demonstration
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	• **Think about a time** when you forgot something recently (e.g., a name, appointment, where you placed something). Write a sentence or two describing what happened. • **List 2 things** you already use to help you remember tasks or information. Examples: sticky notes, setting alarms, using a calendar, asking for reminders. • **Try one new memory helper** this week that we talked about in class (such as writing a daily to-do list or placing your keys in the same spot every day). • **At the end of the week**, write 2–3 sentences about how using that memory helper worked for you. Was it helpful? Would you use it again?
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	1. **Below are four common memory challenges.** Read each one carefully. 2. **Choose one internal strategy** (like visualization or repetition) and **one external tool** (like a checklist or calendar) that could help solve each problem. 3. **Explain briefly in a few sentences** why each strategy or tool would be a good fit for that specific challenge. **Memory Challenge Examples:** a. *You keep forgetting to take your medication each morning.* b. *You often forget someone's name right after being introduced.* c. *You misplace your glasses or keys several times a week.* d. *You can't remember the details of a story someone told you earlier in the day.*
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	1. Think about a typical day in your life—from waking up to going to bed. 2. Based on what we've learned in class, **design a "brain-healthy day" schedule** that includes choices that support memory and brain function. Try to include: o One activity for **physical health** (e.g., walking, stretching) o One for **mental stimulation** (e.g., reading, a puzzle, a memory game) o One for **relaxation or stress management** (e.g., deep breathing, journaling) o One **memory helper** (e.g., using a planner, writing a list)

	3. Write your schedule with times and activities (it can be simple, like: *9:00 am – Stretching and deep breaths*). Then write **2–3 sentences** explaining how these choices help your brain.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Completion, Embedded Questions, Matching Items, Multiple Choice, Objective Exam
If Other:	
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Guest Speakers, Lecture, Multimedia presentations, Role play/simulation
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Skill practice, Study
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Katz, Lawrence and Manning Rubin. *Keeping Your Brain Alive: 83 Neurobic Exercises to Help Prevent Memory Loss and Increase Mental Fitness*. Workman Publishing, 2014. (Discipline Standard)
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite	
Category	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). if applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding	

course objective under each skill(s). if applicable	
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Matthew Kline
Date:	05/02/2025
Original Board Approval Date:	12/16/2025
Effective Term:	FALL 2026