

Toolkit for Instructors: **Teaching about Aging**

This guide is meant for Instructors at Rutgers University who are interested and able to incorporate content on aging into their coursework but don't know where to start.

This guide was designed and created by the RU Taskforce on Aging with Israa Assaf and supported by the New Brunswick Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement at Rutgers University.

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Why is it important to include content on aging in the class I am teaching?

Before sharing the importance of addressing and educating students about ageism, it is important to look at the history of ageism. Ageism is a term coined by Dr. Robert Butler in 1969 in an article he penned for the Gerontologist. In this piece, Dr. Butler identified prejudices based on age to be a national problem, and something that exists between middle aged and older people, and young people (Butler, 1969).

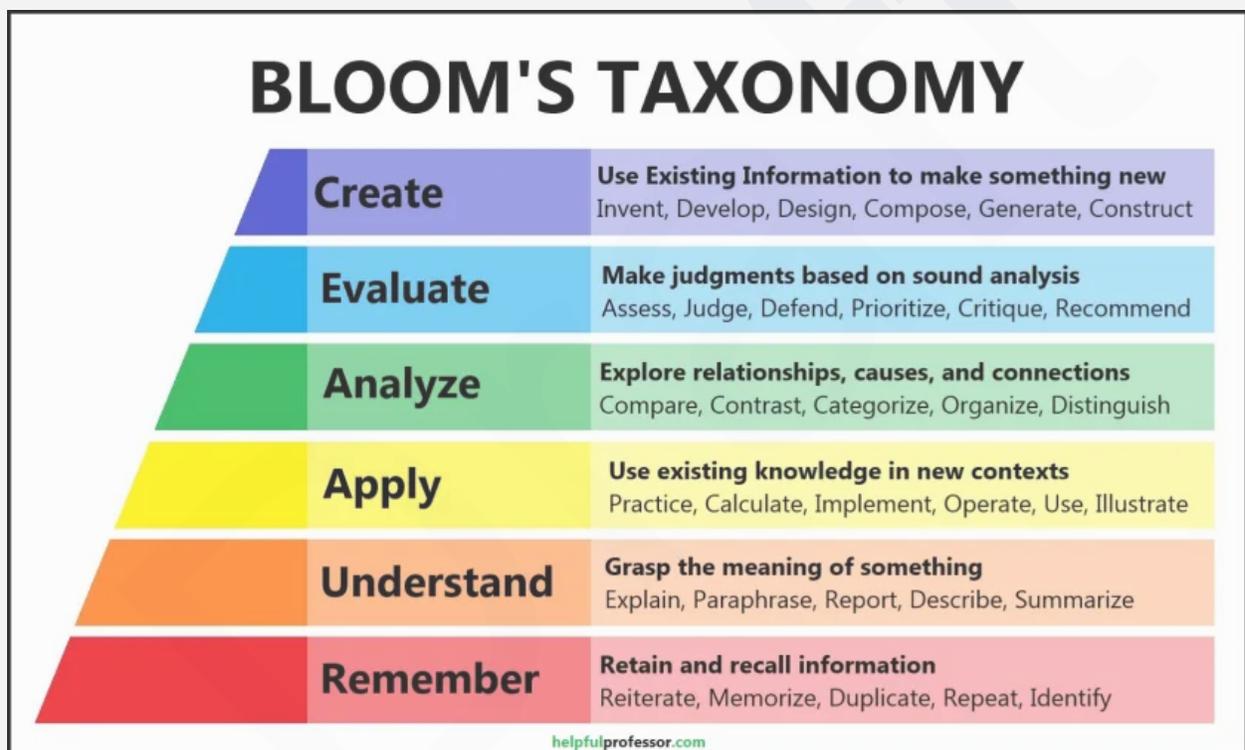
A little more than 50 years later, we unfortunately still see ageism exist in society today. Even more so, researchers like Dr. Becca Levy have identified how negative beliefs about age are not only unpleasant but also can influence one's memory, hearing, and cardiovascular health (Levy, 2022).

Ageism is often a factor of diversity that receives the least attention (Morrow-Howell & Gonzales, 2020). It is important now, given the impacts of ageism and the development of offices at universities and colleges focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion, to start walking the walk. Let's keep the momentum going and not just agree that ageism is bad, and age-inclusivity is good. Let's make sure our students know it too.

Bloom's Taxonomy Guide

What is Bloom's Taxonomy?

This framework was created by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. It consists of six different levels of learning, remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. Each level has corresponding goals and attributes to help achieve the specific learning goal ([Fort Hays State University, 2023](#)).



Ageism- Introduction

Level/ Goal	Resources
Remember	<p><u>Video (7 minutes):</u> HuffPost Video. (n.d.). A Victim and Activists on the Harmful Effects of Ageism. Video. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-victim-and-activists-on-the-harmful-effects-of-ageism_n_5aeef847e4b0834e0cdf15b6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real-life reality of older people facing ageism while trying to find a job and navigate life. <p><u>Podcast (21 minutes):</u> Not Born Yesterday. (2023). Confused About Ageism? Here's Help! <i>Spreaker</i>. [Audio Podcast]. https://www.spreaker.com/user/15217497/kyrie-fullepisode022623</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An audio podcast about finding which situations ageism is mostly found in. <p><u>Video (1 minute):</u> Universitat Rovira i Virgili. (2020). Science in 1 minute: What is Ageism? <i>YouTube</i>. https://youtu.be/Ske-jnTDWtk?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very brief definition of ageism in a video. <p><u>Reading:</u> Green, C. (2018). TV Tropes and Ageism: How Kids' Pop Culture Promotes Discrimination. <i>Each Other</i>. https://eachother.org.uk/tv-tropes-ageism-how-kids-pop-culture-adds-discrimination/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short reading on the early showcasing of Ageism within children's shows and other platforms of entertainment.
Understand	<p><u>Video (46 minutes):</u> TELLUS Originals. (2023). Golden. <i>YouTube</i>. https://youtu.be/kc8RCRDUPjY?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief interviews with many different age groups who have experienced some extreme ageism within everyday life, workplace, family, etc. <p><u>Podcast (23 minutes):</u></p>

Retirement Wisdom. (2022). An Anti-Ageist Second Act Business – Jan Golden. [Audio Podcast].

<https://www.retirementwisdom.com/podcasts/an-anti-ageist-second-act-business-jan-golden/>

- Audio Podcast speaking mostly about ageist birthday cards, Changing the Narrative, and positive outlooks on aging.

Reading/Study:

Levy, B. R., Slade, M. D., Chang, E.-S., Kanno, S., & Wang, S.-Y. (2020). Ageism Amplifies Cost and Prevalence of Health Conditions. *The Gerontologist*, 60(1), 174–181.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny131> [LINK](#)

- Article reading on the influence that Ageism has on overall health conditions in the older community.

Lecture (53 minutes):

Changing the Narrative. (2023). Birthday Cards, Ageism, and Humor. *YouTube*. <https://youtu.be/NkU1LSoPgc?feature=shared>

- Recorded Zoom lecture by the organization, “Changing the Narrative”. Discussion on ageist humor and its commonality.

Reading:

Age and Age Discrimination by Sheldon Reid

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/aging-issues/ageism-and-age-discrimination.htm>

- Guide through what ageism is, where it is present, and how to combat ageism.

Apply

Class Activity:

Implicit Bias Age Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

- Set of questionnaires that can indicate if an implicit bias is present within a person or not.
- Click on the AGE test

Class Activity:

“Would You Approve?” Worksheet

https://www.familyconsumersciences.com/wp-content/uploads/Activity-2_Would-you-approve.pdf

- Yes or No questions to show where a person might stand on ageism and/ or awareness of it.

<p>Analyze</p>	<p><u>DIRECTLY FROM THE BOOK <i>Breaking the Age Code</i> by Becca Levy (Pg. 206-207):</u></p> <p><u>Awareness Exercise 1: Five Images of Aging</u></p> <p>Jot down the first five words or phrases that come to mind when you think of an older person. Even if you already did this exercise in Chapter 1, try it again to see whether your age beliefs have shifted since you started reading this book. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. How many of your responses are negative and how many positive?</p> <p>If you find yourself with lots of negatives in the Five Images exercise, that doesn't mean your views are set in stone. Most of us have unconsciously assimilated negative age beliefs from our surroundings, but we can reverse these beliefs. Becoming aware of them is the first step.</p>
<p>Evaluate</p>	<p><u>Class Activity:</u></p> <p>Anti-Defamation League (ADL) https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/understanding-and-challenging-ageism_1.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LINK to a PDF that explains different in-class activities for understanding ageism.
<p>Create</p>	<p><u>Class Activity:</u></p> <p>Create Artist-free birthday cards. Allow students to look up ageist birthday cards and see how they can create anti-ageist birthday cards themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look up examples of ageist birthday cards. <p><u>Class Activity:</u></p> <p>Social Media Post- World Ageism Day!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have students create a social media post (insta post, facebook post, tiktok, X (twitter) thread, etc.) promoting World Ageism Day (good for Fall semesters as it is in October). ● In this post, students should include visual promoting of World Ageism Day, backed up with multiple resources and references. ● Alongside this could be a 2-3 page paper about their post, findings, and appropriate resources (could be scholarly).

Ageism and other “Isms”

Level/ Goal	Resources
Remember	<p><u>Podcast (46 minutes):</u> GeriPal. (2023). On Racism and Ageism: Romona Rhodes, Sharon Brangman, Tim Farrel, and Nancy Lundebjerg. [Video Podcast]. https://geripal.org/on-racism-ageism-ramona-rhodes-sharon-brangman-tim-farrell-and-nancy-lundebjerg/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A video and audio podcast on the intersection of Racism and Ageism. <p><u>Reading:</u> Butler, N.R. Age-ism: Another Form of Bigotry https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/9/4_Part_1/243/569551</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An article about how common and reformed ‘Ageism’ has become in recent times. A rising concern for older people’s housing situations raises ageism within communities. <p><u>Video (7 minutes):</u> MSNBC. (2023). Women face ageism at every stage of their career, study shows. <i>YouTube</i>. https://youtu.be/lzmC5FOfaAs?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectionality of Ageism and Sexism. Women can face both in the workplace.
Understand	<p><u>Video (3 minutes):</u> Region of Durham. (2022). Learning from each other to overcome ageism. <i>YouTube</i>. https://youtu.be/phbg9e9vXjU?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageism in older people and younger people by conducting interviews between both groups of people and the personal effects of ageism. <p><u>Video (8 minutes):</u> TEDx Talks. (2018), Thoughts Matter: How Mindset Influences Aging & Life Span Daisy Robinton TEDx BeaconStreetSalon. <i>YouTube</i>.</p>

	<p>https://youtu.be/nBtaci_BGQ4?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A TED talk about how having a good mental mindset will influence positive aging. <p>Video(11 minutes): TEDx (2018). How Generational Stereotypes Hold Us Back at Work. https://www.ted.com/talks/leah_georges_how_generational_stereotypes_hold_us_back_at_work?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The severity of having generational biases and assumptions that interrupt the environment and effectiveness in the workplace. 	
<p>Apply</p>		
<p>Analyze</p>	<p><u>DIRECTLY FROM THE BOOK <i>Breaking the Age Code</i> by Becca Levy (Pg. 206-207):</u></p> <p>Awareness Exercise 4: Awareness of Generations Think about your five closest friends. If you're like me, these five people probably have birthdays within a couple of years of yours. Of course, there's nothing wrong with enjoying the company of your age peers, but the ease with which we keep strictly to ourselves, generationally speaking, is another enabler of negative age beliefs. Think about how to increase your intergenerational contact. Take a look at how many meaningful intergenerational interactions you had in the last week. If you have trouble thinking of many, come up with two activities you could undertake in the next month that involve different generations.</p>	

Evaluate		
Create	<p><u>Class Exercise:</u> Create a Case Study-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This can be a simple exercise or a heavier project where students create a case study depending on what type of class they are in (ex. Social work case, Nurse case, etc.)• Let students create a made up case study that includes problems, issues, solutions, prevention, intervention, and resources. The topic should mainly be about Ageism as well as other ‘Isms” or intersectionalities.	

Taking ACTION Towards Age-inclusivity

Level/ Goal	Resources
Remember	<p><u>Podcast (17 minutes):</u> Seriously Social (2021). Why ageism is such a hard “ism” to fight. [Audio Podcast] https://www.seriouslysocialpodcast.org.au/e/ageism/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The struggle to fight against Ageism compared to that of other “isms” and ways in which to minimize its greater effects. <p><u>Video (4 minutes):</u> AARP (2016). Millennials Show Us What ‘Old’ Looks Like Disrupt Aging. <i>YouTube</i>. https://youtu.be/IYdNjrUs4NM?feature=shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected Millennials showcase their implicit biases of what older people look like doing simple tasks such as walking.
Understand	<p><u>Video (8 minutes):</u> Morgan, D. (2022). Fighting Back Against Racism. <i>CBS</i>. [Video]. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fighting-back-against-ageism/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews were conducted with people in the gerontology field and their opinions on how to combat ageism. <p><u>Video (15 minutes):</u> Moore, R. (2023). Aging is my Superpower. TEDx. [YouTube Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGr73xZ-S7s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rita Moore showcases the superpower that age holds and empowers others to unlock this superpower. <p><u>Video (12 minutes):</u> TED What baby boomers can learn from millennials at work – and vice versa. https://www.ted.com/talks/chip_conley_what_baby_boomers_can_learn_from_millennials_at_work_and_vice_versa?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedco</p>

	<p>mshare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that many generations are now working in the same workplace at the same time, bringing awareness <p>Reading: Gerhardt, W. M., Nachemson-Ekwall, J., Fogel, B. (2022). <i>Harnessing the Power of Age Diversity</i>. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2022/03/harnessing-the-power-of-age-diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This reading talks about the gaps between different generations and the outcome of these gaps. <p>Reading: American Psychological Association. (2018). <i>How Race-related Stress Impacts Older African Americans</i>. https://www.apa.org/topics/aging-older-adults/african-americans-race-related-stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An intersection on race and aging. This reading showcases how stress affects the lives of older African Americans. <p>Resource Guide: Multicultural Aging Resource Guide by the American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/multicultural</p> <p>Video (17 minutes): Decade of Healthy Aging: The Platform. (2022). “Older People Have Much More to Give- Films Made by Older People for the UN Decade of Healthy Aging”. https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/find-knowledge/voices/stories/detail/older-people-have-much-more-to-give</p>	
<p>Apply</p>	<p>Pamphlet: Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. (2021). Quick Guide to Avoid Ageism in Communication. Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing, <i>World Health Organization</i>. https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/quick-guide-to-avoid-ageism-in-co</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Analyze</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>DIRECTLY FROM THE BOOK <i>Breaking the Age Code</i> by Becca Levy (Pg. 206-207):</u></p> <p><u>Awareness Exercise 3: Noticing Age Beliefs in Media</u></p> <p>A good way to make visible the invisible is to record both negative and positive images of aging that you encounter in the course of just one week, using a notebook or your smartphone. When you watch your TV or stream shows, take note of whether there are any older characters, what roles they play, and whether these paint aging in a negative or positive light. As you spend time online or read the newspaper, write down how older persons are included and note when they aren't included. At the end of the week, tally up the numbers of negative and positive images of aging, as well as the number of omissions. In my studies, I found that this kind of active noticing helps develop a keen awareness of not just blatant ageism, but also the more subtle forms of exclusion and marginalization.</p> <p><u>Paper:</u></p> <p>Film Paper-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch the movie “A Man Called Otto”, 2022. (On Netflix as of 11/30/2023) ● Have students write a 2-3 page paper addressing the following questions: What forms of Ageism did you see through the film? Provide detailed examples and timestamps.
<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluate</p>	<p><u>Ageism in Communication Guide:</u></p> <p>https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ageing/quick-guide-to-avoid-ageism-in-communication---en.pdf</p>

Create

Class Exercise:

Write a Memo to Congress-

- This class exercise or project lets students write a memo that can be sent out to congress within the scope of ageism
- Some things that can be a guide for the memo: Why isn't ageism as important as other isms? What is congress actively doing in an effort to combat ageism/ age discrimination?

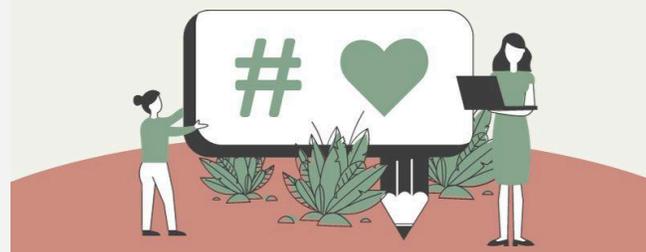
Class Exercise:

Campaign Project-

- This project is aimed to create a political or other type of campaign that addresses ageism/ age discrimination (made up or real).
- Examples: Organize a rally, protest, donations, etc that is specified towards ageism. Students can also create websites and social media platforms.

Don't Use: Ageism Language Pamphlet

DON'T USE: AGEISM TERMINOLOGY



The illustration shows two stylized figures, a man and a woman, standing on a red platform. They are positioned next to a large whiteboard. On the whiteboard, there is a green hashtag symbol (#) and a green heart symbol. The man is pointing at the whiteboard, and the woman is holding a laptop. There are some green plants and a large pencil icon at the base of the whiteboard.

 "BOOMER"	 "OLD MAN"
 "GRANNY"	 "OLD WOMAN"
 "YOU LOOK GREAT FOR YOUR AGE"	 "PAST ONE'S PRIME"
 "YOU'RE TOO OLD FOR..."	 "YOU'RE TOO YOUNG FOR..."
 "LITTLE OLD LADY"	 "GRUMPY OLD MAN"
 "COOT"	 "OLDSTER"

Ageism/ Anti-Ageism Photo Bank



<https://images.app.goo.gl/BuBsJxrJSCiFDZgEA>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/c8Wfe9BiTDk4otyda>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/51kbwKWncQQ9df146>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/8J3rMqBGfBUSJ8Mh7>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/qfZhtWmfhbHjVYc98>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/jNMyzoCRJTsw2oLC9>



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<https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/?r=13899>



<https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/?r=13883>



<https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/?r=13809>



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