



The University of Western Ontario

SOCIOLOGY 9265a
Social Aspects of Aging
Fall 2016

September - December, Thursdays 1:30-4:30

Professor: Ingrid Arnet Connidis, PhD

Office Hours: By appointment (see me after class, call me, send me an e-mail, drop by)

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***Some of the assigned readings and dates for assigned readings may change prior to the second class, in part to reflect students' interests and in part due to further tweaking.**

Course Description

This course will take a multi-level critical perspective on social aspects of aging that considers the reciprocal links among individual experience (micro), social institutions such as work and family (meso), and structured social relations and the welfare state (macro). Individual aging concerns personal responses and approaches to aging, identity, and agency. Individual aging is negotiated in the context of population aging and other social trends; social constructions of age, gender (gender identity), class, race, ethnicity and ability; and state policies and globalization. We will consider dominant theoretical approaches, cultural views, research findings and policy initiatives related to aging in Western society from the perspective of critical gerontology. Of particular interest is the interplay between macro-level phenomena (the economy, social policy, demographic and social change, gender relations) and micro-level interaction (agency; factors that affect how relationships are negotiated); in the context of meso-level institutions such as families and work.

Students are expected to attend classes and to be prepared by reading assigned materials and considering points of discussion, questions or comments **before each class. *Bring your readings for the week to class!***

As a courtesy to the rest of the class, please notify the professor before class if you will be unable to attend.

Classes will usually open with comments by the professor followed by focused discussion. Be ready to jump in, ask questions, and raise issues.

Methods of Evaluation

A great thing about graduate courses is the chance for discussion. Small numbers mean that everyone can participate. Involvement will be promoted by assigning 10% for participation and by having **seminar presentations** that provide critical summaries of selected readings. Details of seminar

expectations will be discussed further in class. A written version of seminar presentations will be submitted on the day of the presentation. Further details will be distributed in the first class.

There will be a **mid-term test** consisting of essay question/s. Students will receive the question/s one week prior to the test. Having a test helps you to consolidate your understanding of foundational materials and gives you the chance to practice critical analytical writing that synthesizes materials concisely, a valuable skill inside and outside academia.

There will be a final **15-page term paper** (double-spaced, 12 pitch Times New Roman font). Students will select a topic that is related to the course and approved by the professor. Readings and themes from the course must be incorporated as a central component of the paper. Students will submit a brief written proposal by **October 20th** (earlier is fine) that includes enough detail to permit assessment of its pertinence to the course and its feasibility. **Students are responsible for being aware of all regulations pertaining to plagiarism.**

Evaluation Breakdown

Class participation.....	10%
Seminar.....	25% (15% for oral presentation; 10% for written summary)
Mid-term Test.....	30% (Nov. 3 rd ; date may change following discussion in first class)
Final Paper.....	35% (Dec. 5 th by 4 p.m.)

Course Material(s)

Multiple chapters from the following books along with journal articles and book chapters:

+Estes, Carroll L., Simon Biggs and Chris Phillipson. 2003. Social Theory, Social Policy and Ageing: A Critical Introduction Maidenhead, Berkshire, England: Open University Press (McGraw-Hill)

Katz, Stephen. 2005. Cultural Aging: Life Course, Lifestyle, and Senior Worlds Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.

Learning Outcomes

The aims of the course are for participants to enhance their ability to:

- Think critically about aging from multiple perspectives (older person, family members, social policy, social inequality) at multiple levels (individual, social institutions, society)
- Write analytically about a related topic. This requires familiarity with core theoretical and research themes from the course so that they can be applied effectively to relevant research; synthesis of material; clear and critical argument about the material; concise and clear writing
- Present and discuss ideas clearly and logically to others
- Engage in constructive debate in response to the ideas presented by others.

Course Schedule and Readings

+ = readings on life course and aging comp list

1. September 8 Introduction

Overview of Course

Multi-level analysis; A critical perspective; a life course approach; ambivalence

+Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. 2014. "Age Relations and Family Ties over the Life Course: Spanning the Macro-Micro Divide." *Research in Human Development*. 11:291-308. DOI: 10.1080/15427609.2014.967050.

2. September 15 Core Issues & Challenges

Population Aging: Crisis or Challenge?

Gee, Ellen M. 2002. "Misconceptions and Misapprehensions about population ageing." *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 31:750-753

Research Challenges

Longino, Charles F. 2005. "Editorial: Putting a Human Face on Gerontological Research: Identity Issues." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 60B:3:S117.

Herlofson, Katharina and Hagestad, Gunhild O. 2011. Challenges in moving from macro to micro: population and family structures in ageing societies. *Demographic Research*, 25, pp. 337-370. DOI: 10.4054/DemRes.2011.25.10

Theoretical Challenges

Cain, Leonard. 2003. "Age-Related Phenomena: The Interplay of the Ameliorative and the Scientific." Pp. 295-326 in Richard Settersten, Jr. (Ed), *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life* Amityville, NY: Baywood.

3. September 22 Theoretical Approaches: Introduction and Overview

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. Chapter 2. Social Theory and Ageing." Pp. 8-19.

+Hagestad, Gunhild O. and Dale Dannefer. 2001. "Concepts and Theories of Aging: Beyond Microfication in Social Science Approaches." Pp. 3-21 in Robert H. Binstock and Linda K. George (Eds.) *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* 5th Edition. N.Y.: Academic Press.

Powell, Jason L. & Hendricks, Jon. 2009. The sociological construction of ageing: lessons for theorising. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29, pp. 89-94. DOI: 10.1108/01443330910934745

4. September 29 A Critical Perspective

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 1. "An Introduction to Social Theory, Social Policy and Ageing." Pp. 1-7.

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. Chapter 2. Social Theory and Ageing." Pp. 19-24.

Ray, Ruth. 2008. Coming of age in critical gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 22:97-100

Estes, Carroll. 2008. A first generation critic comes of age: Reflections of a critical gerontologist. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 22: 120-131. Doi: 10.1016/j.jaging.2007.12.014

*Katz, Stephen. Introduction pp. 11-20. Cultural Aging, Life Course, Life Style, and Senior Worlds.

5. October 6 A Life-Course Perspective and Ambivalence

Heinz, Walter R. 2001. "Work and the Life Course: A Cosmopolitan-Local Perspective." Pp. 3-22 in Victor W. Marshall, Walter R. Heinz, Helga Kruger, and Anil Verma (Eds.) *Restructuring Work and the Life Course* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Settersten, Jr., Richard A. 2015. Relationships in time and the life course: The significance of linked lives. *Research in Human Development*, 12, 217-223. DOI: 10.1080/15427609.2015.1071944

Dannefer, Dale. 2013. Age and Sociological Explanation: Expanding Horizons in the Study of Aging and the Life Course. *Contemporary Sociology* 42, 6, pp. 793-800.

+Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. 2015. "Exploring Ambivalence in Family Ties: Progress and Prospects." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77:1:77-95. DOI:10.1111/jomf.12150.

6. October 13 Aging, Structured Social Relations and the Welfare State

+Dannefer, Dale. 2003. "Cumulative Advantage/Disadvantage and the Life Course: Cross-Fertilizing Age and Social Science Theory." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 58B:6: S327-S337.

Harrington Meyer, Madonna and Wendy M. Parker. 2011. Gender, Aging, and Social Policy. Pp. 323-335 in Robert H. Binstock & Linda K. George (Eds.) *The Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 7th ed. Burlington, MA: Elsevier.

Creedon, Michael A. 2008. "Megatrends that Affect Caregiving Boundaries." Pp. ix-xviii in Anne Martin-Matthews & Judith Phillips (Eds.) *Aging and Caring at the Intersection of Work and Home Life*. NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Brandt, Martina & Christian Deindl. 2012. Intergenerational transfers to adult children in Europe: Do social policies matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 75:1L235-251 doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.010128x

7. October 20 Being Old

Settersten, Richard A. and Hagestad, Gunhild O. 2015. Subjective ageing and new complexities of the life course. Pp. 29-53 in *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, Springer.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0198-8794.35.29>

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 3. Age and Identity. Pp. 25-43.

Cruikshank, Margaret. 2008. Aging and identity politics. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 22:147-151.

*October 27 Fall Study Break

*November 3 Mid-term Test

8. November 10 Constructing Old Age: ‘Successful’ Aging

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 5. Productive Aging, Self-surveillance and Social Policy. Pp. 63-78.

Moulaert, Thibault & Simon Biggs. 2013. International and European policy on work and retirement: Reinventing critical perspectives on active ageing and mature subjectivity. *Human Relations*. 66:1:23-43

Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 6. “Biomedicalization, Ethics and Ageing.” Pp. 79-101

Katz. Chapter 9. Barbara L. Marshall and Stephen Katz. “Forever Functional: Sexual Fitness and the Aging Male Body.” Pp. 161-187.

Katz, Stephen & Calasanti, Toni. 2014. Critical Perspectives on Successful Aging: Does it “appeal more than it illuminates?” *The Gerontologist*, pp. pp. 1-8. doi: 10.1093/geront/gnu027

9. November 17 Aging, Work & Retirement

Katz. Chapter 8. Katz & Debbie Laliberte-Rudman. “Exemplars of Retirement: Identity and Agency Between Lifestyle and Social Movement.” Pp. 140-160..

Loretto, Wendy & Sarha Vicerkstaff. 2013. The domestic and gendered context for retirement. *Human Relations*. 66:1:65-86

Phillipson, Chris. 2013. Commentary: The future of work and retirement. *Human Relations*. 66:1:143-153.

Taylor, Philip & Earl, Catherine. 2016. The social construction of retirement and evolving policy discourse of working longer. *International Social Policy*, 45, 251-268.
 Doi:10.1071/S0047479415000665

10. November 24 Macro-level Contexts of Aging

Katz. Chapter 10. "Growing Older Without Aging? Postmodern Time and Senior Markets." Pp. 188-201.

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 8. The Politics of Ageing. Pp. 122-144.

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 7. Ageing and Globalization. Pp. 102-121.

11. December 1 Wrap-up and Discussion

Phillipson, Chris. 2013. **Chapter 9** Preparing for ageing populations: rebuilding institutions;
Chapter 10 Conclusion: New pathways for later life. Pp. 145 – 177 in Chris Phillips, 2013. *Ageing*,
Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

+Estes, Biggs & Phillipson. 2003. Chapter 9. Conclusion. Pp. 145-154.

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines

Only serious and unforeseeable reasons will be accepted as grounds for being late for any assignments. The need for an extension must be discussed *before* the due date of the assignment (seminar, test, term paper) and documented through the appropriate channels.

A Note on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. See **Scholastic Offences** (below) for the link to Scholastic Discipline regulations.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com: <http://www.turnitin.com>

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/appeals_discipline/index.html

Accommodation

Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request a one-time accommodation (brief illness, family emergency), the student should inform the professor when they are able so accommodation can be made. To request other accommodation(s), the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.

Completion of Course Requirements

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help: http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their

unit. The [Wellness Education Centre](#) (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs: <http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html> Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' [Living Well](#) website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html

Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in [Western's Campus Recreation Centre](#): <http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#> Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>.