THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
Department of Sociology  
SOCILOGY 2202  
SOCILOGY OF AGING

September 2013  Wednesday, 2:30-5:30  Room: SSC 3024

Professor: Dr. Ingrid Arnet Connidis  
Office: Social Science Centre 5329  
Phone: 519-661-3691  
E-mail: connidis@uwo.ca  
Office Hours: By appointment (see me after class, call me, send me an e-mail)

**I encourage you to print the course outline and bring it to class.**

***Some specifics may change at or prior to the first class. Required readings will not change.***

Course Description

This course examines aging from a sociological viewpoint, emphasizing the social aspects of aging. Theoretical perspectives and research approaches will be considered in relation to a variety of subject areas, including: health, living arrangements, family relationships, informal and formal support, and work and retirement. The course presents a profile of Canada’s older population, examines trends related to an aging population, and explores the experience of aging from the vantage points of older persons and of society. A life course perspective that focuses on aging as a social process is encouraged. Students will explore family ties and aging in greater depth and will consider the link between family life and other facets of social life in later life. The implications of an aging society and of research for social policy will be considered in relation to all core topics.

Required Course Readings


Course Requirements *specifics may change and will be confirmed in September.

Students are expected to attend all lectures and are responsible for all material in lectures (including guest speakers, activities, and films) and course readings. You should do the assigned readings BEFORE the date indicated on the course outline in order to facilitate class discussion and to ensure that any questions you may have had about the readings were addressed in class. If you miss a class, you should borrow notes from another student.

- Current events assignment       15%
- Old Person Profile          20%
- Test One (multiple choice)        20%
- Test Two (multiple choice)        20%
- Final exam          25%

Current Events Assignment       15%

Each week, starting after the first test, students will submit hard copies of 3 different articles from reputable newspapers or magazines or posted special reports from major networks (e.g., Globe & Mail, McLean’s, CBC; the Economist; Time; Newsweek; BBC; not “rags”, not official policy documents, and not research journals) covering current events (as recent as possible and no more than one year old; primarily Canadian content or international comparisons that include Canada) that relate to the week’s topic. These could be news stories, cover stories, editorials, or opinion pieces. The key is that they are intended for a lay audience and presented by mass media outlets.

Students will briefly describe the article they considered most interesting to the class and answer factual questions about it (excerpts can be read as well). Students will also write a two-page (double-spaced, typed, 250 words per page) critical analysis of the 3 articles that relates them to key course themes. You should be explicit about how your articles relate to course materials. A reference page with full citations (title, source, date, page number, internet site, date) must be included as part of your submission (see http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html for APA or ASA guidelines).

The articles and two-page analysis are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date.

Specific assignment dates will be determined during the first and second classes. If you are not there, you will choose from topics that have not already been claimed.

Grading: 5% for presenting one article to the class on the scheduled date; 10% for the written, critical analysis of 3 articles submitted on the scheduled date.
Old Person Profile  

Students will locate a photograph of an old person (known or unknown to the student) and develop an analytical narrative about that person that reflects key concepts and knowledge about aging and family ties obtained from the course. Tell about the life of your subject and relate his or her life experiences to what you have learned about aging and family ties.

This is a chance to take a more creative approach to writing by applying critically what you have learned in the course to the life of your chosen subject (real or imaginary). Discuss ways in which (and possible reasons why) your subject's experiences fit (and do not fit) typical patterns for his/her life stage, theoretical perspectives on aging, and life course trends for his/her demographic profile and position in society (structured social relations).

Use course materials only.

5 double-spaced typed pages and the photograph (a photocopy is fine) and a reference page.

Due: March, 12, 2013 (at the beginning of class)

Learning Outcomes

Committed involvement (attending class, keeping on top of readings, participating in class discussion, working hard on course assignments and tests) in this course is expected to have the following learning outcomes:

- The ability to critically apply core theoretical frameworks and concepts to social aspects of aging.
- The ability to relate core sociological concepts and research to real-life transitions in middle and later life.
- The ability to take a multi-level perspective which relates the political and economic environment, structured social relations (e.g., age, gender, class), social institutions (e.g., work and family), interpersonal relationships (especially with family members) and individual experience to one another.
- The ability to critically interpret quantitative and qualitative data related to aging presented in lay and professional sources.
- Improved proficiency in oral communication and writing skills.
**Things You Must Know:**

**Course Prerequisites**
Soc 020 or 021E. Unless you have either the prerequisite for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Academic 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/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

**Plagiarism**
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage 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 academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

**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. 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).

**Scantron Exams**
Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Missed Exams and Late Assignments**
Make-up exams will be granted with approved documentation only. If you have a conflict with one of the exam dates, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the Academic Counseling office at least one week before the regularly scheduled exam and provide documentation of the conflict. If approved, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam. If you miss an exam date or the due date for an
assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor’s documentation, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam or hand in your assignment at a later date.

The Social Science Academic Counselor's office is on the 3rd floor of the SSC (3207).

**Compassionate Grounds**
Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

In Case of a Death: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

**Make up exams**, if approved, will cover approximately the same material but the questions may vary. If you miss an exam, you must not talk to other students in the class about what was on the exam.

**Drop Box**
If you are submitting your assignments outside of class time, please leave them in the drop box located outside room SSC 5307 in the sociology department. Only assignments put in the drop box will be date stamped. You will not be able to leave your assignment in my mailbox.

**Grade Guidelines**

The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are required to follow. For Sociology courses at the 2100 and 2200 level:
* A's are not to exceed B’s, and
* Class averages must be in the range of 66-70%
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Please check the Department of Sociology web site (www.ssc.uwo.ca/sociology/) for class cancellations or changes.

*Note page numbers for assigned readings.

Sociology 2202 First Term

INTRODUCTION

September 11  Introduction. Discussion of course, expectations. Assign current events topics

*Purchase readings and prepare for next class.

*Bring your readings to class each week.

INDIVIDUAL AND POPULATION AGING: SOCIAL CONTEXTS


CMS, Chapter 10, p. 251, 1st full paragraph; p. 257-top of p. 258 (Typological Models); p. 263, Paragraphs 2 and 3 (Individual Differences Related to Later-Life and Well-being), Successful Aging.

September 25  CMS. Introduction pp. xv-xvii.


HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND AGING? THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

October 2  CMS. Chapter 3, pp. 55-84. Social Theory.


October 16  CMS. Chapter 4, pp. 85-113. Knowledge Building and Older People. Library instruction this week or next (Location TBA)
AGING AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

CMS. Chapter 6, pp. 136-166. Aging and Ethnicity.

HEALTH AND AGING

*Detailed discussion of measures and study results are not central.*

Review

November 6 CMS, Chapter 8, pp. 191-193; Figure 8.1 on p.196; 197-199; 206-211; 214-217. Mental Well-being and Mental Disorder.

November 13 *Mid-term Test (20%)*


SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: WORK AND RETIREMENT


Have a happy and safe break!
Sociology 2202 Second Term

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: FAMILIES AND CAREGIVING

January 8  Chappell, McDonald & Stones (CMS), Chapter 11, pp. 270-299. Families and Aging. (Detailed discussion of particular relationships, e.g., siblings, will occur later.)

CMS, Chapter 12, pp. 301-327. Social Support and Caregiving.

FAMILY TIES


Intimate Ties

January 22  Connidis, Chapter 3, pp. 53-64. Intimate Ties in Later Life

Connidis, Chapter 4., pp. 65-80 (Interdependence; Marriage; Gay/Lesbian Partnerships). Intimate Partnerships

January 29  Connidis, Chapter 4, pp. 81–92. (The Impact of Life Transitions on Intimate Ties) Intimate Partnerships

Review

February 5  Mid-term Test (20%)

Intimate Ties (continued)

February 12  Connidis, Chapter 5, pp. 93-106. Being Single in Later Life

February 19  READING WEEK

Intergenerational Relations

March 5 Connidis, Chapter 7, pp. 137-152. Exploring Intergenerational Relations.


March 12 Connidis, Chapter 9, pp. 179-186. Childless Older Persons.


March 19 Connidis, Chapter 11, pp.203-224. Divorce, Remarriage, Step Ties, and Intergenerational Relations.

Sibling Ties


Connidis. Chapter 13, pp. 241-258. Life Transitions and Sibling Ties.

RESEARCH AND POLICY


Review for test

Final Test (25%) will be held during the exam period.

Have a happy and safe summer!
Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.