



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2202-001
SOCIOLOGY OF AGING
Fall/Winter 2016-2017
Thursdays, 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm, SSC 2028

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Lin
Office Hours: By Appointment
Department of Sociology, (SSC 5209)
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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.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 from: Sociology 1020, 1021E, 1025A/B, 1026F/G, 1027A/B.

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:

- Critically apply core theoretical frameworks/concepts to social aspects of aging.
- Relate core sociological concepts and research to real-life transitions in mid 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.
- Critically interpret quantitative and qualitative data related to aging presented in lay and professional sources.
- Improved proficiency in oral communication and writing skills.

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.

Required Text(s)

- Funk, L. (2015). *Sociological Perspectives on Aging*. Oxford University Press.
- Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. 2010. *Family Ties & Aging*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press/Sage.
- Additional readings will be posted on OWL.

Method of Evaluation

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| • Current Event Assignment - Due on November 24 | 15% |
| • Test One (computer-marked multiple choice) – November 10 | 20% |
| • Test Two (computer-marked multiple choice) – February 2 | 20% |
| • Old Person Profile – Due on March 9 | 25% |
| • Final exam – During April final exam period | 20% |

Evaluation Breakdown

Current Events Assignment (15%)

After the first test, students will submit hard copies of 2 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 2 year old**; primarily Canadian content or international comparisons that include Canada) that relate to the study of aging. 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** summarize the articles (one page max.) they chose and then write a **critical analysis** of the 2 articles that are related to course themes (3 pages max). You should be explicit about how your articles are relevant to the course materials (e.g., aging-related concepts, theories and themes). A reference page with **full citations** (title, source, date, page number, internet site, date) must be included as part of your submission

This assignment should be **4 double-spaced typed pages (12-pitch font)** in length and it is due on by **midnight, Thursday November 24**. Please **fully edit your paper** before your submission to the dropbox available on (OWL).

Old Person Profile (25%)

Students will locate a photograph of an old person (known or unknown to the student; *choosing someone known to you is recommended*) 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).

This assignment should be **5 double-spaced typed pages (12-pitch font)** and the photograph (a photocopy is fine) and a reference page. Please **fully edit your paper** before your submission to the dropbox available on (OWL).

Due: March 9, 2017

How to Contact Me

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Lin: clin64@uwo.ca or see me after class/by appointment (SSC 5209)

How to get important information

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

If you miss 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 hand in your assignment at a later date.

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.

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 (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed 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 for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking 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 (www.turnitin.com).

Policies on Examinations

You may not use any electronic devices during examinations. Computer marked multiple-choice tests/exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

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. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Readings:

*Note page numbers for assigned readings.

Sociology 2202 First Term

INTRODUCTION

September 8 Introduction. Discussion of course, expectations.
*Purchase readings and prepare for next class.

INDIVIDUAL AND POPULATION AGING: SOCIAL CONTEXTS

September 15 Funk, Chapter 1, pp. 1-top of 7. Introduction to social gerontology.

Funk, Chapter 2, pp. bottom of 36-48. Attitudes and Social Issues that Affect Older People.

September 22 Funk, Chapter 2, pp. 28-36. Population Aging.
Brody, Elaine. 2010. On Being Very Old. *The Gerontologist*, 50, No. 1, 2–10
doi:10.1093/geront/gnp143
<http://gerontologist.oxfordjournals.org/content/50/1/2.full.pdf+html>

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND AGING? THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

September 29 Funk. Chapter 1, pp. 7-26. Sociological Theory of Aging.

October 6 Connidis. Chapter 1, pp. 13-22. Theoretical Orientation.

October 13 CMS. Chapter 4, pp. 85-113. Knowledge Building and Older People.

ANTI-AGING & SUCCESSFUL AGING

October 20 Funk. Chapter 3, pp. 51-73.
Vincent, J.A. (2006). Ageing Contested: Anti-ageing Science and the Cultural Construction of Old Age. *Sociology*, 40(4), 681-698.

October 27 Fall Study Break (No Class)

HEALTH AND AGING

November 3 Funk. Chapter 4, pp. 74-98.

November 10 **Test One (20%)**

ECONOMIC SECURITY, WORK AND RETIREMENT

November 17 Funk. Chapter 5, pp. 99-121.

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF OLDER ADULTS

November 24 Funk. Chapter 6, pp. 122-142.

****Current Events Assignment Due**

December 1 Kiel, J.M. (2005). The Digital Divide: Internet and Email Use by the Elderly. *Medical Informatics and the Internet in Medicine*, 30(1), 19-23.

Cresci, M.K., Yarandi, H.N., & Morrell, R.W. (2010). The Digital Divide and Urban Older Adults. *Computers, Informatics, Nursing*, 28(2), 88-94.

*Documentary: Cyber Seniors

Have a happy and safe break!

Sociology 2202 Second Term 2017

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: FAMILIES AND CAREGIVING

January 5 Lecture material only: Social Support and Caregiving.

FAMILY TIES

January 12 Connidis. Preface and Chapter 1, pp. 3-13; 22-24. Older Persons in a Family Context.

Connidis. Chapter 2, 25-49. The Availability of Family Ties in Later Life: Demographic Trends and Family Structure. (Includes Living Arrangements)

Intimate Ties

January 19 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 26 Connidis, Chapter 4, pp. 81--92. (The Impact of Life Transitions on Intimate Ties) Intimate Partnerships
Review

February 2 *Test Two (20%)*

Intimate Ties (continued)

February 9 Connidis, Chapter 5, pp. 93-106. Being Single in Later Life

February 16 **READING WEEK**

February 23 Connidis, Chapter 6, pp. 107-136. Transitions in Intimate Relationships: Losses and Opportunities.

Intergenerational Relations

March 2 Connidis, Chapter 7, pp. 137-152. Exploring Intergenerational Relations.
Connidis, Chapter 8, pp. 153-178. Support Exchanges Between Older Parents and Their Children.

March 9 Connidis, Chapter 9, pp. 179-186. Childless Older Persons.
Connidis, Chapter 10, pp. 187-203. Grandparents and Grandchildren.

***Old Person Profile Assignment Due**

March 16 Connidis, Chapter 11, pp.203-224. Divorce, Remarriage, Step Ties, and Intergenerational Relations.

Sibling Ties

March 23 Connidis. Chapter 12, pp. 225-240. Sibling Ties in Middle and Later Life.
Connidis. Chapter 13, pp. 241-258. Life Transitions and Sibling Ties.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

March 30 Connidis. Chapter 14, pp. 259-290. Research and Policy: Issues and Direction

April 5 Review for test