



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2178B
Navigating Life: Aging and the Life Course

Wednesday, 9:30, [REDACTED]

Delivery Method - In-Person

Instructor: Dr. A. Willson

Office Hours: By appointment, on Zoom

Email: willson@uwo.ca

Course Description: Many countries in the world are wrestling with aging populations. This course examines aging as a social process involving interactions between people and social structures. It emphasizes a life course approach and examines the relationship between the cumulative experiences of people, opportunities and constraints, and quality of life.

Prerequisite(s): None

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 2202

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to

- define the concept of aging as a social process;
- understand how social structures and agency interact to influence the experience of aging;
- explain the strengths and limitations of central theories used to understand aging and the life course;
- understand how life chances and well-being across the life course are shaped by social inequalities resulting from intersections of social class, gender and sexuality, race-ethnicity, and age;
- articulate the main arguments of key topics in the sociology of aging and the life course as they apply to current issues related to individual and population aging;
- demonstrate effective communication skills through assignments and class discussion.

Course Material:

1. *Aging as a Social Process: Canada and Beyond*, 7th Edition. 2019. Oxford University Press. Available in the Western Bookstore. <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbooks-and-course-materials>

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Evaluation Breakdown

Attendance	10%	
Applied Essay	15%	March 27, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
Midterm	35%	February 14, 2024
Final Exam	40%	April exam period

Attendance

Class attendance and participation are important to learning. This element is meant to reward students who come to class and take part in the group learning experiences, while also providing the flexibility to miss a few classes for health or other reasons. Attendance will be taken at some point during the class. We will meet a total of 10 times, not including the first class and midterm exam date.

Attending 9 or 10 classes = 10 points
Attending 7 or 8 classes = 7 points
Attending 5 or 6 classes = 5 points
Attending 4 or fewer classes = 0 points

Applied Essay

Students will select a course concept and (a) define and explain the concept based on course material, and (b) apply the concept to a relevant current event, controversy, or debate. Sources for the application may include publicly available news articles, social media postings, podcasts, or videos. Essays should be two double-spaced pages (12 pt font, 2.54 cm margins, approximately 600 words). A separate reference page using the American Sociological Association referencing style must be included. Submitted in OWL course site. Essays may be submitted at any time during the term, but must be submitted by March 27 at 5:00 p.m.

Exams

Multiple choice. In-class. Electronic devices will not be allowed during exams; no aids permitted.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be able to write a makeup exam that is scheduled by the Department of Sociology. The course professor and teaching assistant will not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

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.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, synchronously at the times indicated in the timetable. The grading scheme will not change.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. For absences approved by Academic Counselling, an extension on the Applied Essay will be arranged and missed midterm exams will be allowed to write a make-up exam on the date scheduled by the Department of Sociology. Any work submitted after the deadline without academic accommodation will receive an automatic 5% penalty. If an assignment is more than one full week late, an additional 5% penalty will apply.

Absences from Final Examinations:

Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](#)” document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

Use of AI:

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. It is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. Students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Written assignments must reflect the student’s own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions. The same

principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Course Schedule and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 10	Course introduction	
Jan 17	Aging as a Social Process	Chapter 1
Jan 24	Physical, Psychological, and Social Change across the Life Course	Chapter 3
Jan 31	The Demography of Aging	Chapter 4
Feb 7	Social Inequality and the Life Course	Chapter 6
Feb 14	Midterm	
Feb 21	Reading week	
Feb 28	Health and Health Care	Chapter 7
March 6	The Lived Environment	Chapter 8
March 13	Family Ties and Aging	Chapter 9
March 20	Work, Retirement, and Economic Security in Later Life	Chapter 10
March 27	Social Participation and Social Connectedness	Chapter 11
April 3	Caregiving and Issues at End of Life	Chapter 12