

SOC 2620 (The Sociology of Aging: 3.0 credit hours)
January – April 2012, at 229 St. Paul's College
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:30a.m.-12:45p.m.

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Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:20 p.m., #307 Isbister Bldg.

REQUIRED TEXT

Chappell, N., McDonald, L., & Stones, M. (2008). Aging in Contemporary Canada(2nd Ed).
Toronto: Pearson/Prentice-Hall.

Additional required readings below are available through a course-specific online reserve site (Library homepage, "subject" – "social sciences" – "sociology", "course-specific library guides").

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

In this course we will examine sociological and social gerontological approaches to aging, with a focus on Canada. After participating, you will be able to think sociologically about aging and articulate linkages between individual aging experiences and broader political, economic, socio-cultural, demographic and historical contexts. You will have the opportunity to critically examine your own assumptions as we address common misconceptions about older adults and the aging process. After completing this course you will also be able to identify and discuss key social issues, policies and practices affecting the well-being of older persons and perpetuating age-based social inequalities.

Note: My powerpoint slides will be posted under "files" in Jump throughout the term, usually by 5p.m. prior to each class. You may find it helpful to print and supplement these with details during lectures.

PREREQUISITE

[a grade of "C" or better in SOC 1200 (077.120) or the former SOC 1201 (077.120)] or [a grade of "C" or better in both SOC 1211 (077.121) and SOC 1221 (077.122)].

OUTLINE, DUE DATES AND READINGS

Thinking Sociologically about Aging (Jan 5th, 10th and 12th)

READ: Ch 3

The Aging Population (Jan 17, 19)

READ: Ch 2 **AND:** Gee, E.M. (2002). Misconceptions and misapprehensions about population ageing. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 31(4), 750-753.

Age as Social Location: Ageism and Age-Related Inequality (Jan 24, 26)

READ: Ch 1 (except 'attributes of attitudes' p.6 to top of pg11) **AND:** Calasanti, T. (2005). Ageism, gravity and gender: Experiences of aging bodies. *Generations*, 29(3), 8-12.

Intersections of Age with Gender and Ethnicity (Jan 31, Feb 2*)

READ: Ch 5 **AND** Ch 6

***NOTE: SENIORS SERVICE BACKGROUNDER = DUE Feb 2nd**

Age Identity and the Aging Experience (Feb 7, 9)

READ: Kaufman, S. (1986). The Ageless Self. Reprinted in Gubrium, J.F., and Holstein, J.A. (Eds.), (2000). *Aging and Everyday Life*. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA. Pp.103-112.

Anti-Aging, 'Successful aging,' Health, and Biomedicalization (Feb 14, 16)

READ: Estes, C.L., & Binney, E.A. (1989). The biomedicalization of aging: dangers and dilemmas. *The Gerontologist*, 29(5), 587-596.

READING BREAK FEB 20-24

Self-care, Aging in Place and "Home is Best" (Feb 28, Mar 1)

READ: Purkis, M.E., Ceci, C., & Bjornsdottir, K. (2008). Patching up the holes: analyzing the work of home care. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 99(Supplement 2), S27-S32.

AND: Aronson, J. (2006). Silenced complaints, suppressed expectations: The cumulative impacts of home care rationing. *International Journal of Health Services* 36 (3), 535-536.

Institutionalization, Autonomy and Dependency (March 6, 8)

READ: Diamond, T. (1990). Nursing homes as trouble. Reprinted in Gubrium, J.F., and Holstein, J.A. (Eds.), (2000). *Aging and Everyday Life*. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA. Pp.401-412

The Economics of Aging: Employment, Retirement, and Pensions (March 13, 15).

READ: Ch 13 **AND** Ch 14.

Note: March 16: due date for voluntary withdrawal

Age and Social Integration (March 20, 22)

READ: Ch 12 **AND** Bruce, E. (2004). Social exclusion (and inclusion) in care homes. In A. Innes, C. Arbibald & C. Murphy (eds), *Dementia and Social Inclusion* (pp.123-136). London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.

Family Relationships and Caregiving (March 27, 29)

Assigned Reading: Ch 11 **AND:** Chappell, N.L., & Penning, M.J. (2005). Family caregivers: increasing demands in the context of 21st-century globalization? In Johnson, M.L., et al. (Eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*, Chapter 5.7.

Death, dying and end of life care (April 3,5)

READ: Ch 16 **AND:** Seale, C. (1998). "The Social Aspect of Death (Chapter 3)" In *Constructing Death: The sociology of dying and bereavement* (pp.50-71). New York: Cambridge University Press.

ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMS

SENIORS SERVICE BACKGROUNDER = 20% DUE Thursday February 2nd (in groups of 2-3)

Identify and find out information about an institution or organization in Winnipeg that primarily serves older persons. Arrange to visit and tour this organization and meet with at least one representative such as a manager or program director (provide their name and contact number). Based on your informal observations and conversations, as well as background research where appropriate, prepare a **6 to 8 page** double-spaced paper (Times New Roman 12 pt font) that describes:

- The type of service and its target population (characteristics and numbers, eligibility)
- It's mission statement, history and funding sources
- What kinds of challenges the service faces, including challenges in reaching and serving the older population
- Whether there been any changes in funding or eligibility for the service.
- What kinds of benefits clients have reported
- Whether volunteers part of the organization, and if so, how many, how are they recruited, and what challenges are faced (e.g. with turnover, etc).

Be prepared to very briefly describe your project in class. Full marks will require going beyond description, to connect what you've learned to the concepts and ideas addressed in class and in course readings. Critical reflection and connecting the experiences of those in the organization to broader contexts is encouraged. Photographs are permitted as part of the project, but if people are included, you must obtain their written permission.

RESPONSE TO READINGS = 50% (5% each for 10 readings) DUE THROUGHOUT COURSE.

For EACH of the above listed supplemental readings: prepare a **maximum** one-page single-spaced paper, to hand in **the Tuesday** of the week that reading is assigned. **First**, briefly summarize, in your own words and as concisely as possible, the main points of the article. **Then**, reflect on what statements or ideas most grabbed your attention, and why. For instance, were they personally relevant? Did they remind you of concepts or theories we discussed in class? Finally, **critically appraise** the ideas raised in the article, or the methods (if they were empirical articles). Were the ideas nuanced? Did they acknowledge multiple sides of an issue? Would different conclusions have been reached if they looked at the issue from another angle?

FINAL EXAMINATION = 30%

Date TBA: sometime between April 9-23

The exam will be combine both short and long-answer questions. You will have some choice of questions (e.g. "answer 3 of the following 5 short- answer questions").

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grade Distribution: University of Manitoba Senate Policy #1307 requires a “post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned courses that will ensure an equitable correspondence between grades and level of performance in all sections.” Accordingly, the final grade distribution in this course may be raised or lowered to achieve this equity and, therefore, your final grade may be changed.

Grading Scheme: A+=90% and above; A=80-89%; B+=76-79%; B=70-75%; C+=66-69%; C=60-65%; D=50-59%; F=under 50%.

Statement of Consequences of Missed Tests: Missed tests cannot be taken at a later date, unless a valid note from your doctor is provided within 1 week of the scheduled test. Requests for other special consideration must be made well **in advance** and/or supported by appropriate documentation. If a make-up test is approved, you must attend at the scheduled time. Failure to complete a test will result in a mark of zero for that test.

Statement of Consequences of Late Assignments: Late assignments will not be accepted or graded. In exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted, provided you receive my permission **in advance**. Documentation (such as a doctor’s note in the case of injury or illness) may be required.

Campus and Disability Services: If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, or have a disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you should discuss these issues with your instructor and/or one of the following Student Affairs offices as soon as possible: Disability Services; Student Counselling and Career Centre; University 1; Learning Assistance Centre.

Faith Holidays: I should be notified of your intended absence at least three weeks in advance, where special arrangements are needed to avoid jeopardizing your studies

Disruptions: Disruptions due to excessive talking or early departures are especially distracting in large classes. Be **considerate and respectful** of the needs and rights of your classmates. Persistent disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Any student with a legitimate reason for leaving class early should inform the instructor at the beginning of class.

Academic Integrity: Students should acquaint themselves with the University’s policies on “Personation at Examinations” and “Plagiarism and Cheating” found online under “Section 8” in “University Policies” at the University of Manitoba’s Academic Calendar and Catalog (www.umanitoba.ca/calendar). The Faculty of Arts reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.