Yukon University

COURSE OUTLINE

SOCI 1301

Sociology of Aging

Distance Education

3 Credits

PREPARED BY: Jillian Deri, PhD
DATE: Fall 2020

Sociology of Aging

INSTRUCTOR: Jillian Deri, PhD	**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 11-noon
OFFICE LOCATION: Online Zoom	**CLASSROOM:** Zoom (link in Module)
E-MAIL: jderi@yukonu.yk.ca	**CLASS TIME:** Mondays 1-3:55pm
	DATES: September 1-December 8 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Aging while an individual experience, is also an experience that is heavily influenced by social structures and social processes. Using the sociological perspective, this course explores contemporary aging by examining choices and experiences that transcend the individual and incorporate larger social groups and processes. In doing so, learners build a foundation in sociological concepts and theories to apply this knowledge to age-related issues. Learners consider demographic factors leading to population aging; the role of social structures and processes in shaping experiences of physical aging; as well as aging in relation to health systems, retirement, social engagement, and family in Canadian society.

PREREQUISITES

None

RELATED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to have adequate access to the Internet to access Moodle, Modules, content and Zoom sessions. Students will need access to Podcasts, Youtube and Netflix.

EQUIVALENCY OR TRANSFERABILITY

See https://www.bctransferguide.ca/ for more information

LEARNING OUTCOMES

With conscientious effort, upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the perspective, basic concepts and theories used in the discipline of sociology of aging

2. Discuss the demographic forces that have led the population aging in Canada within the context of social change and diversity, including the Indigenous context

3. Examine the role of social statuses and social processes in shaping individual perceptions, definitions and experiences of physical aging

4. Describe how individual choices and experiences of aging are connected to broader contexts of major institutions of healthcare, retirement, social engagement, and family in Canadian society

5. Explore current age-related social issues as they pertain to caregiving, social support, and death and dying

6. Apply the sociological perspective, concepts, and theories to social issues surrounding the elderly in Canada

COURSE FORMAT

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, this course is being taught online using a variety of materials, activities, and technical solutions. You will need to visit the course Moodle site and participate in online activities and discussions as assigned and scheduled.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Atul Gawande. 2014. Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters at the End. Metropolitan Books Henry Holt and Company. (Available as Kindle and as Audiobook from Audible)

Ashton Applewhite. 2016. This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism. Celadon Books. (Available as Kindle and as Audiobook from Audible)

Various media is assigned as noted in the weekly course schedule (below), all of which are available online, and links will be posted on this syllabus and/or on Moodle. Students will be required to view various media through Netflix and Youtube. A membership to Netflix will be required for this class (First month free, $12.99/month afterwards, which can be cancelled at any

time.) If access to Netflix and/or Youtube is not available to you, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

EVALUATION

Modules	35%	Weekly
Interview Report	25	October 30
Research Paper	20	December 10
Proposal/Outline	5	November 6
Presentation	10	December 7
Participation	5	
Total	100	

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A+	90-100%	Excellent Work
A	85-89%	Nearly Excellent Work
A-	80-84%	Very Good Work
B+	76-79%	Good Work
B	72-75%	Mostly Good Work
B-	68-71%	Above Average Work
C+	64-67%	Average Work
C	60-63%	Mostly Average Work
C-	55-59%	Below Average Work
D	50-54%	Poor Work
F	0-49%	Failing Work

Weekly Modules:

Each week, student will complete the readings, media, reflections and activities within the Module. Each Module must be completed in full in order to proceed to the following Module, and must be complete by Monday 1pm of that week (i.e. in preparation for our Zoom Session). These activities are designed to a) instruct content, b) practice summarizing content, c) enable comprehension, d) retention of the material & e) practice reading, writing and engagement.

Note: *Weekly modules cannot be completed late. Each Module must be completed before you can begin the next one.* Late submissions will receive a grade of 0.

Each of the 12 modules will be evaluated as a low-stakes item out of 3% each (with the exception of one which is worth 2%) for a total of 35%. These will be graded based on how thoroughly you complete the content, as well as effort. More lengthy media/readings will be assigned in advance, and the instructions, media and activities will be explained within the Module. Students are expected to spend approximately 3-5 hours a week studying for this course.

Note: Students will meet weekly in a Zoom Session. Module will be complete weekly, and will cumulate in our Zoom session to review and discuss Module content.

Interview Project:

Each student will interview 5 seniors/ elderly people (minimum of 3, maximum of 10 if you are ambitious). If possible, the interviews will take place face-to-face, but given the current state of affairs, students may utilize Zoom or Facetime, or even just the telephone. Record what you can, and if this is not possible, take significant notes during the discussion and immediately afterwards, review your notes and fill in the content. Interview the seniors less about their health needs, and more about their social side of life, but mostly let them tell their stories.

The learning outcomes of this project are: a) For students to get to know a sample of seniors; b) to practice communication and active listening; c) to get to know the needs of a sample of elderly people, d) to learn random items you would not have expected.

Interviews should be a minimum of 45 minutes each (with no maximum); however this is flexible given the needs of the interviewees. Students will write a 10 page (double-spaced) report about the interview, with various quotes, paraphrased sections and a general summary. *Note:* you are not

submitting the transcripts, but instead a report about the interviews. Creativity is highly encouraged. If finding seniors to interview is challenging for you, talk with your instructor.

Note: We will cover ethics & etiquette of research and a *formal* ethics review within our Module. *These must be completed before you can engage in an interview.*

The questions and content is up to you, but here is a list of questions to get you started:

a) What do you most appreciate about getting older? What do you find challenging?

b) What do you wish you knew when you were younger? What advice would you tell your younger self?

c) What do you wish the youth of today knew about your generation? About your life?

d) How do you like to spend your spare time? What was a perfect way to spend a day off when you were younger?

e) What are your hobbies? Did you have different hobbies in the past?

f) What did you do for a career?

g) Do you have any regrets?

h) What is most valuable part of your life these days?

i) What do you require to feel happy on a day to day level?

j) Tell me about one of the most striking events in your life.

Remember: most people's favourite subject is themselves. I encourage you to let your interviewee speak about whatever is on their mind.

Research Paper:

Research papers will engage in-depth with one topic of your choosing, related to the sociology of aging, in 7-10 pages double-spaced. *Your paper should address proposed solutions to described social issues.* Proposals for the paper will be a 1-2 pages, outlining the central topic of analysis, questions you will address and a list of 5 references. The proposal exercise will help you clarify your focus early in the course and allow your instructor to give you extensive feedback on your ideas. You are welcome to submit your proposal early. You are welcome to include questions for your instructor in the proposal. Creativity is highly encouraged.

Research papers will be graded based on the following criteria:

Research
- Sources are relevant to the topic and appropriate for study
- Topic is researched and described in sufficient depth
- Effective synthesis, making logical connections between resources and social issues
- Minimum of *five* references (both peer-reviewed books / journal articles and non-academic resources are welcome (i.e. websites, documentaries, blogs, etc). Given the vast array of information online, both quality and misinformation, students must discern the quality of the reference.

Content
- Clearly defined focus and arguments
- Fully explore important aspects of the topic in sufficient depth and detail
- Comprehension of research, explained fully, clearly, and accurately
- Reasoned arguments supported with evidence and analysis
- Application of theories to social issues
- Recognition of broader implications of social issues
- Depth of analysis

Writing
- Well-organized, with logical and systematic connections
- Written clearly and comprehensible; convey coherent and intended meanings
- Grammar, accurate and effective sentence structure
- Vocabulary, appropriate for postsecondary level
- Academic tone (avoids slang, etc)
- Effective use of quotations and references
- Personal opinion, *I* statements and subjectivity are welcome and encouraged, (backed up evidence-based knowledge)
- Formal referencing is required. You are welcome to use any formatting style, as long as it is consistent.

Presentation:

Students will present the material they have researched for the research paper. Each presentation will be a maximum of 10 minutes. Highlight the core ideas, findings, and extract from your research what you find to be the most interesting. You are welcome to do a live presentation, or prepare a video in advance for sharing.

The Presentation will be *peer evaluated*. After your presentation, each student will fill out an evaluation based on the following criteria:

a) Clarity & Quality of the presentation: 3

b) Quality of Research and Content: 3

c) Innovative and Creative: 3

d) The X Factor: 1 point given when presentations are particularly innovative and/or engaging

For feedback, along with a grade, each student will write:

1. What was fabulous?

2. One thing that I learned

3. What could you do to improve your presentation?

Participation: Your participation grade is based on your attendance, effort and engagement in online discussions, forums and module activities. Multiple innovative contributions that further student learning will earn you top grade. Attendance at Guest Lectures is mandatory.

Late Policy: 5% a day will be deducted for late assignments. The weekly modules cannot be submitted late. Extensions can be requested for emergencies with appropriate documentation. I encourage you to prioritize health and approach your instructor if any health concern emerges that will influence your learning success.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT CONDUCT

Information on academic standing and student rights and responsibilities can be found in the current Academic Regulations that are posted on the Student Services/ Admissions & Registration web page.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism occurs when a student submits work for credit that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, without citing the source from which the material is taken. Plagiarism can be the deliberate use of a whole piece of work, but more frequently it occurs when students fail to acknowledge and document sources from which they have taken material according to an accepted manuscript style (e.g., APA, CSE, MLA, etc.). Students may use sources which are public domain or licensed under Creative Commons; however, academic documentation

standards must still be followed. Except with explicit permission of the instructor, resubmitting work which has previously received credit is also considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize material for assignments will receive a mark of zero (F) on the assignment and may fail the course. Plagiarism may also result in dismissal from a program of study or the University.

YUKON FIRST NATIONS CORE COMPETENCY

Yukon University recognizes that a greater understanding and awareness of Yukon First Nations history, culture and journey towards self-determination will help to build positive relationships among all Yukon citizens. As a result, to graduate from ANY Yukon University program, you will be required to achieve core competency in knowledge of Yukon First Nations. For details, please see www.yukonu.ca/yfnccr.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring an academic accommodation to fully participate in this class. These accommodations are available for students with a documented disability, chronic condition or any other grounds specified in section 8.0 of the Yukon University Academic Regulations (available on the Yukon University website). It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations. If a student requires an academic accommodation, they should contact the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC): lac@yukonu.ca.

THE LORENE ROBERTSON WRITING CENTRE

All students are encouraged to make the Writing Centre a regular part of the writing process for coursework. The Lorene Robertson Writing Centre is staffed by helpful writing coaches from across the University and offers one-on-one appointments to students in need of writing support.

The Lorene Robertson Writing Centre can help you:

- Get started on an assignment and focus your ideas

- Outline and plan your assignment

- Write clearly, logically and effectively

- Address specific needs and writing problems

- Revise the first and final drafts of your project

- Gain confidence in your writing

- For in-person appointments, the Centre coaching office is located in the Academic Support Centre in room A2302. You can also participate in coaching appointments over the phone or online. see the Academic Support Centre schedule for English and writing support times.

Course Schedule

**Each week will include Module content, media and activities. See the Module for further instruction. Links to media will be posted within the Module.

Note: Various other content, both from your instructor as well as links to online content, may be added to this course schedule. Pay attention to Course Announcements for any further information.

Note: Each Module will be complete *before* our Zoom session in which we will review and discuss Module content and activities. **Therefore the weekly schedule runs Tuesdays to Mondays**

September 1-7: Introduction

Instructions:
a) Familiarize yourself with this course syllabus and with Moodle.
b) Introduce yourself on Moodle in the Discussion.
c) Read and reply all your classmates posts.

Media:
• NPR Fresh Air with Louse Anderson (37 minutes)

Module Complete by September 7 (Ungraded)

September 8-September 14: Introduction to Sociology of Aging

Media:
• David Sinclair Talks at Google (1 hour)
• Podcast: Ologies: Biogerontology Aging; Caleb Finch with Alie Ward
• Documentary on Okinawa (Japan)

Module Complete by Monday September 14 1pm (Graded Module 1)

First Zoom Meeting September 14

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September 15-September 21: Theories of Aging Part 1

Media:
• Aubrey De Grey podcast: Talks at Google (one hour)
• Podcast: Intelligence Squared: Are lifespans Long Enough?

Module Complete by September 21 (Graded Module 2)

Zoom Meeting September 21

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September 22-28: Theories of Aging Part 2: Disabilities and Chronic Illness

Media and Readings within Module

Module Complete by September 28 (Graded Module 3)

Zoom Meeting September 28

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September 29-October 5: Aging, Stereotypes & Ageism

Reading: Ashton Applewhite: This Chair Rocks Manifesto Against Ageism

Media:
• Wim Hof Vice

• Documentary Iris

Module complete by October 5 (Graded Module 4)

Zoom Session October 5

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October 6 - October 12: Health Care and Technology

Media and Readings within Module

Module complete my October 12 (Graded Module 5)

October 12: Thanksgiving, classes cancelled - **No Zoom Session**

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October 13-October 19: Caregiving

Reading:
• Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Introduction, Chapter 1 & 2)

Media:
• Documentary End Game (Available on Netflix 2018 - 40 minutes)

Module Complete by October 19 (Graded Module 6)

Zoom Session October 19: Guest Lecture by Niki Vezina on Hospice Care

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October 20-26: Medically Assisted Death

Reading:
• Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Chapter 3, 4 & 5)

Media:
• Intelligence Squared US Debate: Legalize Assisted Suicide

Module Complete by October 26 (Graded Module 7)

Zoom Session on October 26

Interview Project Due October 30

October 27- November 2: Caregiving Part 2

Reading:
• Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Chapter 6-End)

Media:
• Stephen Jenkinson London Real Die Wise (45 minutes)

Module Complete by November 2 (Graded Module 8)

Zoom Session: November 2: Guest Lecture by Andre Gainsford who works as a Death Doula, assisting people in their final stages of life

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November 3-9: Social Programs

Module Group Activity: Think Tank Project in Teams of 3

Readings and Media within Module

Module Complete by November 9 (Graded Module 9)

Zoom Session: November 9

Proposal/Outline Due: November 6

November 10-16: Grief & Legacy

Media:
• DNews Plus episode: What We Know About Death and Our Plan to Beat it
• 5 Stages of Grief

Module Complete by November 16 (Graded Module 10)

Zoom Session November 16: Guest Lecture by Little Woo on Grief Counselling

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November 17-23: Aging and Sexuality

Media:
• Podcast: Sex and Aging with Pepper Schwartz on Dear Sugars
• Medially Assisted Sex

Module complete by November 23 (Graded Module 11)

Zoom Session: November 23

November 24-November 30: Alternative Treatments

Readings and Media within Module

Module complete by November 30 (Graded Module 12)

Zoom Session: November 30

December 1-7: Open Session

Module not graded

Zoom Session: December 7: Student Presentations

December 8: Final Class: Review & Standards of Care

Zoom Session December 8

Final Research Paper Due December 10