



COURSE OUTLINE

SOCI 1301

Sociology of Aging

Distance Education

3 Credits

PREPARED BY: Jillian Deri, PhD

DATE: Fall 2024



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Sociology of Aging

INSTRUCTOR: Jillian Deri, PhD

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 4-5pm

OFFICE LOCATION: Online Zoom

CLASSROOM: Zoom

E-MAIL: jderi@yukonu.ca

CLASS TIME: TBD

DATES: September 3-December 9
2024

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 aging population in Canada, 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

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)

Recommended: 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, \$16.49/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	30%	Weekly
Book Review	15	October 1
Interview Project	30	November 17
Research Essay	25	December 9
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. 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.

Each of the 10 modules will be evaluated as a low-stakes item out of 3% each, for a total of 30%. These will be graded based on how thoroughly you complete the content, as well as effort. 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.

Book Review:

Students will select a book of their choice for a book review, either fiction or non-fiction, in which the content addresses topics related to aging. Highlight the central ideas described in the book and offer a thoughtful analysis. Choose 2-3 ideas to review in depth. Your book review will be 3-5 pages long (double-spaced).

Here is a list of potential books. You are welcome to select a different book about aging and related topics. Many of these books are available as Kindles/ PDF or as audiobooks (through [audible.com](https://www.audible.com)). You are also welcome to visit your local libraries for more selection.

Ashton Applewhite. 2016. *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*. Celadon Books.

Peter Attia and Bill Gifford. 2023. *Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity*. Random House.

Louise Aronson. 2019. *Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine and Reimagining Life*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

In Love: A Memoir of Loss and Love. 2022. Amy Bloom. Random House.

Fredrik Bowman. 2015 *A Man Called Ove: A Novel*. Washington Square Press.

Lisa Genova. 2009. *Still Alice*. Simon and Schuster.

Bill Gifford. 2016. *Spring Chicken: Stay Young Forever (Or Die Trying)*. Grand Central Publishing.

Stephen Jenkinson. 2015. *Die Wise: A Manifesto for Sanity and Soul*. North Atlantic Books.

Stephen Jenkinson. 2018. *Come of Age: The Case for Elderhood in a Time of Trouble*. North Atlantic Books.

Michael Kinsley. 2016. *Old Age: A Beginner's Guide*. Tim Duggan Books.

Micheal Levitin. 2020. *Successful Aging: A Neuroscientist Explores the Power and Potential of Our Lives*. Penguin Random House LLC.

Barbara MacDonald with Cynthia Rich. 1983. *Look Me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism*. Spinsters/ Aunt Lute.

David Sinclair and Matthew LaPlante. 2019. *Lifespan: Why We Age and Why We Don't Have To*. Simon & Schuster.

Interview Project:

****Note:** Ethics Tutorial and various forms must be complete before you can begin this project**

****Note:** Each student will meet one-on-one with their instructor in a Zoom meeting *before* beginning the Interviews.

Each student will interview 3-5 seniors/ elderly people (minimum of 3, maximum of 10 if you are ambitious). If possible, the interviews will take place face-to-face. However, students may utilize Zoom, video-calls, 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. More importantly, 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 10-12 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? If you could time travel and talk to your younger self, what would you tell her/him?
- 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/interests? Did you have different hobbies/interests 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 a striking event 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. You are encouraged to address proposed solutions to described social issues. If you would like feedback before you submit your paper, you are welcome to send your instructor an introductory paragraph, outline or questions. 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
- 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.

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 may be added to this course schedule. Pay attention to Course Announcements for any further information.

Note: This class is mostly asynchronous, and will include 3 synchronous lectures with your instructor, which will be scheduled later in the term.

September 4-8: Introduction

Instructions:

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

Module Complete by September 8 (ungraded)

September 9-15: Introduction to Sociology of Aging

Media:

- NPR Fresh Air with Louise Aronson
- David Sinclair Talks at Google
- Documentary on Okinawa, Japan

Module 1: September 15

September 16-22: Theories of Aging

Media:

- Aubrey De Grey podcast: Talks at Google
- Podcast: Intelligence Squared: Are Lifespans Long Enough?

Module 2: September 22

September 23- 29: Technology and Intergenerational Dialogue

Reading/ Media:

- Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Introduction, Chapter 1 & 2)
- Long Now foundation: Modern Elder and Intergenerational Workplace: Chip Conley

Module 3: September 29

September 30-October 6: Aging, Stereotypes & Ageism

Book Review due October 1

Readings/ Media:

- Recommended: Ashton Applewhite: This Chair Rocks Manifesto Against Ageism (Chapters Introduction, 1 & 2)
- TED Talk by Ashton Applewhite on Ageism
- TED Talk Laura Cartensen
- Wim Hof Documentary by Vice
- Documentary: Iris

Module 4: October 6

October 7-13: Grief & Legacy

Media and Readings within Module

Module 5: October 13

October 15-20: Sociology of Disabilities and Chronic Illness

Media and Readings within Module

Module 6: by October 20

October 21-27: Living and Dying Well

Readings/ Media:

- Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Chapter 3 and 4)
- Stephen Jenkinson London Real Die Wise
- TED Talk by Rick Doblin

Module 7: October 27

November 4-10: Caregiving

Media:

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

Module 8: November 10

November 12-15: Reading Week

Interview Project Due November 17

November 18-24: Aging and Sexuality

Readings/ Media:

- Applewhite, This Chair Rocks: Chapter 5: No Expiration Date: Sex and Intimacy
- TED Talk: Sex and Aging with Pepper Schwartz
- Talk by Joan Wheeler
- Medially Assisted Sex Vice Documentary

Module 9: November 24

November 25-December 1: Medical Assistance in Dying

Readings/ Media:

- Recommended: Atul Gawande: Being Mortal (Chapter 6-End)
- Intelligence Squared US Debate: Legalize Assisted Suicide

Module 10: November 21

December 2-9

No Module

Final Research Paper Due December 9