

Gerontology 500
Perspectives on a Changing Society:
An Introduction to Aging
Summer 2015
Online

PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS – SPECIFIC DATES AND ACTIVITIES MAY CHANGE SLIGHTLY

INSTRUCTOR

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TEACHING ASSISTANT

TBD

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to introduce you to the fascinating field of Gerontology, the study of aging across the lifespan and old age. Our journey will begin by touching on the longevity revolution taking place in most areas of the world and age-related demographic changes in the U.S. and other countries. We will then review biological, psychological and social theories of aging to provide foundational knowledge regarding thoughts about how and why we age. Next, we will explore in greater detail biological, psychological and social aspects of aging. For example, we will review how our brains and bodies change with age and the consequences of these changes for our health and functioning. We will touch on how aspects of our psychology change with age, including personality, thoughts and emotions. We will also explore how our social connections and activities change with age. We will conclude with an exploration of the role of policy and public and private services in addressing the needs and desires of an aging society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:

- (1) Achieve a general knowledge of the field of Gerontology.
- (2) Achieve a basic understanding of major biological, psychological and social theories of aging.
- (3) Acquire general knowledge of the scientific methods used to probe theories of aging.
- (4) Develop a solid understanding of the age-related demographic changes that are occurring in the U.S. and worldwide.
- (5) Master a basic understanding of biological, psychological and social changes that occur with advancing age and the implications for individuals, institutions, and societies.
- (6) Acquire knowledge of the policies and services instituted at local, state and national levels to address the needs and desires of our aging population.
- (6) Further develop oral and written communication skills.

This course is designed to provide attendees with the support and guidance needed to achieve the objectives noted above.

COURSE WEBSITE

Course readings, announcements and information/resources will be posted to our Blackboard course website.

REQUIRED READINGS

Text

Quadagno, J. (2013). *Aging and the life course: An introduction to social gerontology* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

This text is available for short-term rental on Amazon.com, as well as in new and used print copies and electronic form.

Additional Required Readings

Electronic copies or links to electronic copies of additional course readings will be placed on the course website.

POLICIES

Assignments turned in late for any reason will incur a deduction of 10% of the total point value for the assignment for each day past the due date. Completion of all course readings and assignments and active participation is expected of all students.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Participation. An important aspect of the learning process is the knowledge and insight that is gained from active participation and from sharing your own perspective on a given topic as well as listening to the thoughts of others in the course. Interaction with fellow course participants will primarily occur via oral and written communications in Peer-to-Peer Assignments and Discussion Board Postings on our course website. We use the Self and Peer Assessment system in Blackboard as a mechanism to encourage the “sharing” of your thoughts and work with others in the class. This system is a substitute, to some extent, for the sharing that would occur if we were meeting face-to-face in a single physical location or online at the same period in time. We will also utilize the Discussion Board for the sharing of information and to encourage interaction among course participants. Participation assignments will arise throughout the summer session as part of lecture activities.

Brief Written Assignments. There will be two brief (~5 pages) written assignments. One assignment will be on the topic of ageism and will require discussion of specific examples of ageism. The second assignment will focus on an example of an aging service or policy that is designed to address a specific age-related need or marketplace demand. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided on our course website.

Peer-to-Peer Presentations (via Blackboard Self and Peer Assessment System). You will need to construct a short (~5 minute) audio-narrated Powerpoint presentation (embedding sound which accompanies each slide into the presentation) that provides an overview of material presented in each of the brief written assignments above. Links to tutorials on how to construct audio-narrated

Powerpoint presentations are provided on our course website. Each student in the class will be required to view/listen, and respond, to the audio-narrated Powerpoint presentations of three classmates, as well as his/her own assignment. Peer comments' will NOT directly affect the grade assigned to each assignment by the course teaching assistant/instructor. The goals of the peer-to-peer assessments are to increase 'interaction' and 'familiarity' among class participants, to share information and knowledge with each other, and to enhance oral presentation skills.

Exams. There will be 2 online exams administered midway and at the end of the summer semester. You will have a 4-day (Friday-Monday) or 5-day (Thursday-Monday) window to login into our Blackboard course website and complete each timed exam. Exams are open-note and open-book and will consist of a variety of question types (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, short-answer). The first exam will cover material from the first three weeks of the course. The second exam will cover material from the last three weeks of the course.

Life review project. An important objective of this course is to enhance your ability to understand, evaluate and apply the aging concepts and theories we will learn about in lecture and course readings to your current and future professional and personal lives and in the understanding of everyday phenomena. You will demonstrate your understanding and ability to apply course concepts and theories in the review of the life of a single individual who is at least age 65 years or older. Your review should be approximately 12-15 pages in length. Detailed instructions will be provided on our course website.

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments:

Participation	15%
Brief Written and Oral Peer-to-Peer Assignments (two)	30% (15% each)
Exams (two)	30% (15% each)
Life Review Project	25%

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requests for academic accommodations based on a disability are approved by the Disability Services and Programs (DSP). Requests must be approved each semester and should be submitted to the course instructor and TA early in the semester to ensure time for any necessary accommodations. DSP location: STU 301; phone number: (213) 740-0776, email: ability@usc.edu; web address: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a member of the USC community and this course you are expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity outlined in the Student Conduct Code described in SCampus. These principles include avoiding plagiarism in its many forms, unauthorized collaboration on course assignments, and not cheating. Please see the helpful *Academic Integrity* guide (<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/AcademicIntegrityOverview.pdf>) for an overview and links to additional resources.

SESSION TOPICS AND READINGS

Note that the lecture topics and assigned readings are organized by each of the eight weeks of the course. Our course is designed to address the topics that would be covered during a course in a full semester so the weekly workload will be approximately double that of a course typically taught in the full fall or spring semester. Each week will consist of approximately 5 hours of lecture material and participation activity with the exception of weeks 6 and 7 which require independent fieldwork activity. You will need to listen to these lectures and complete related activities and assigned readings each week so please plan accordingly. The lecture material will be broken up into three to four mini-lectures each week and lectures will typically be posted on Monday and Wednesday morning of each week.

Date	Lecture Topics	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	Course overview	Quadagno Chapters 1, 2, and 4
5/20 – 5/26	Gerontology: An introduction to the field and gerontological science and practice Longevity Revolution Ageism Demography of aging	Alkema, G. E., & Alley, D. E. (2006). Gerontology's future: An integrative model for disciplinary advancement. <i>Gerontologist</i> , 46(5), 574-582. Freedman, M. (2002). Civic windfall? Realizing the promise in an aging America. <i>Generations-Journal of the American Society on Aging</i> , 26(2), 86-89. Wilkinson, J.A. & Ferraro, K.F. (2002). Thirty years of ageism research. In Nelson, T (Ed.) <i>Ageism: stereotyping and prejudice against older persons</i> . MIT Press.
	Participation Assignment	Introduce yourself on our Blackboard Course Discussion Board: See Assignments link on Blackboard course website for instructions <u>Due:</u> Tuesday 5/26 by 9:00 PM PST
Week 2 5/27 – 6/2	Theories of aging: biological, psychological, social The aging body: implications for disease and dysfunction	Quadagno Chapters 3, 6, and 7 (only pages 163 – 168) Agronin, M. E. (2014). From Cicero to Cohen: Developmental Theories of Aging, From Antiquity to the Present. <i>Gerontologist</i> , 54(1), 30-39. Martin, D. J., & Gillen, L. L. (2014). Revisiting Gerontology's Scrapbook: From Metchnikoff to the Spectrum Model of Aging. <i>The Gerontologist</i> , 54(1), 51-58. Weinert, B.T. & Timiras, P.S. (2003). Invited Review: Theories of aging. <i>Journal of Applied Physiology</i> , 95 (1706-1716).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments</u>
	Written and Oral Peer-to-Peer Assignment #1: Ageism Assignment	See instructions posted on course website under Assignments link <u>Assignment Due:</u> Wednesday 6/3 by 9:00 PM PST <u>Peer Responses Due:</u> Monday 6/8 by 9:00 PM PST
Week 3	The aging brain	Quadagno Chapters 7 (only pages 146-162), 8 and 12
6/3 – 6/9	Psychological/mental well-being across the life course Social connections and social activity across the life course	Salthouse, T. A. (2003). Memory aging from 18 to 80. <i>Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders</i> , 17(3), 162-167. Charles, S. T., & Carstensen, L. L. (2010). Social and Emotional Aging. <i>Annual Review Of Psychology</i> , 61, 383-409. Antonucci, T. C., Birditt, K. S., Sherman, C. W., & Trinh, S. (2011). Stability and change in the intergenerational family: a convoy approach. <i>Ageing & Society</i> , 31, 1084-1106.
6/11 – 6/14	Quiz # 1	This is an online quiz that will cover material from weeks 1-3. You may complete any time during the four-day window.
Week 4	Aging-related policy	Quadagno Chapters 5, 11 and 14
6/10 – 6/16	Public and private services for the needs and desires of an aging population (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Long-Term Care)	Additional readings to be determined.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments</u>
Week 5	Work and retirement	Quadagno Chapters 9, 10 and 16
6/17 – 6/23	Civic and productive activity Environments and policies to promote a happy and healthy old age	Additional readings to be determined.
Week 6	Finish Life Review	
6/24 – 6/30	<u>Due:</u> Wednesday July 1 st by 9:00 PM PST	
Week 7	<u>Fieldwork:</u>	
7/1 – 7/7	Aging service or policy field research	
	Peer-to-Peer Assignment #2: Aging Service or Policy	Please see instructions posted on course website under Assignments link. <u>Assignment Due:</u> Wednesday 7/8 by 9:00 PM PST <u>Peer Responses Due:</u> Monday 7/13 by 9:00 PM PST
Week 8	End of life perspectives, policies and care	Quadagno Chapter 13
7/8 – 7/14	The future of gerontology	Additional readings to be determined.
7/16 – 7/19	Exam # 2	This is an online exam that will cover material from weeks 4, 5 and 8. You may complete at any time during the four-day window.

Participation activities (e.g., requests to complete an activity on a website, post a comment or response on the Blackboard Discussion Board) will be embedded throughout weekly lectures. I will identify such participation opportunities in lecture.

Overview of due dates:

Wednesday 6/3 (9:00 PM PST): Brief Written Assignment #1 and Peer-to-Peer Oral Presentation

Monday 6/8 (9:00 PM PST): Peer Responses to Peer-to-Peer Oral Presentation #1

Thursday 6/11 – Sunday 6/14: Complete Exam #1

Wednesday 7/1 (9:00 PM PST): Life Review Assignment

Wednesday 7/8 (9:00 PM PST): Brief Written Assignment #2 and Peer-to-Peer Oral Presentation

Monday 7/13 (9:00 PM PST): Peer Responses to Peer-to-Peer Oral Presentation #2

Thursday 7/16 – Sunday 7/19: Complete Exam #2