

Course Syllabus SY216
Sociology of Aging
F2008, BA 110, T/TR 2:30-3:50

Instructor: Kimberly Ellis-Hale **Off Hrs Location:** TBA **Ext:**4268
Email: kellis@wlu.ca **Off Hrs:** T 12-2 / TR 1-2
Text: Aging as a Social Process: Canadian Perspectives 5th Edition by McPherson & Wister

"... aging, as a social process, involves multi-level and complex interactions between individuals and various social structures; within changing social, economic political, and physical environments; and across diverse cultural contexts, all of which vary at specific periods in history."

McPherson, viii

Course Description

Throughout this course you will be introduced to a broad spectrum of topics and issues related to aging. Although this course is called the Sociology of Aging, we will be drawing on the work of many disciplines including: psychology, epidemiology, health sciences, demography, and public policy; all of which have made significant contributions to the area of gerontology. In exploring the field of aging you will be expected to participate in/complete class discussions, group discussions, individual learning activities, examinations, and a community service placement with a reflective paper.

Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to provide you with a comprehensive introduction to the field of aging, emphasizing the Canadian context. By the end of this course, you should be able to: 1) identify and discuss several key themes and subject areas related to the study of aging, 2) summarize and describe the sociology of aging's major theories, concepts, and ideas 3) provide a concise argument against the tenets of apocalyptic demography, and 4) integrate key ideas and respond with academic breadth to a broad spectrum of gerontological issues. And finally, remember we are from diverse backgrounds and at different points in our academic study— your input will improve the content and enhance the enjoyment of the class for all.

Course Requirements:

◇ Participation Responses (10 worth 5% of your final grade)

In the last few minutes of each Friday class, you will be given time to jot down a quick thought, question or comment to be handed in before you leave (remembering to hand them in is your responsibility). Comments cannot be handed in for classes that you did not attend - you cannot make up missed comments. Fewer than 7 will result in an automatic zero for this portion of your grade.

◇ Movie & Discussion Board Assignment (worth 5% of your final grade)

Several poignant films about the experience of aging are available for home viewing (don't forget to try GenX and the community libraries in addition to the regular movie outlets). You are to select one movie from the movies listed below, watch it at least once, and then participate in a WebCT supported discussion with others who have watched the same film. Although the content of your contributions to the discussion is somewhat discretionary, you should ensure that it reflects and is informed by course content. In other words, make it evident that you identified themes/content from the movie that reflects key concepts from the course. Keep in mind that many of these films may reinforce, as well as question stereotypes or biases related to the experience of aging (sometimes one or the other, sometimes both). I am interested in seeing

a true discussion, so contributing once may not be in your best interest. Further I would discourage you from waiting until the end of the given time period to contribute (much of what you may have wanted to say could have already been said) or posting an essay without consideration of the discussion's progress. If you would like to suggest additional movies for consideration please do. Sign-up will occur early in November. Discussion boards will be open from November 27-December 1.

Movies: *About Schmidt*; *Driving Miss Daisy*; *Fried Green Tomatoes*; *Strangers in Good Company*; *On Golden Pond*, *A Trip to Bountiful*, *Grumpy Old Men*, *Bucket List*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *Some Things Got to Give*. This list is modifiable and additions will be discussed as the date assignment approaches.

◇ **Midterm Exam (worth 25% of your final grade)**

A midterm exam is scheduled for the beginning of class on October 21 and will include all materials covered in the course up to that point. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer. There will be no make-ups for this, the missed portion of your grade will be added to the value of your final.

◇ **Service Learning (worth 35% of your final grade)**

Service Learning & Reflective Paper

To enhance content integration and deepen your learning experience in aging (with the added bonus of some volunteer work experience), you are required to participate in community service with seniors through Community Service Learning at Laurier at the conclusion of which a 7-10 page reflective paper is to be submitted. Although program details will be provided early in the term (prior to the end of September), it is important for you to know that a minimum of 18 hours of service is required and in many cases up to date vaccinations and a police check are compulsory.

In regards to the reflective paper, you will select an area within the sociology of aging that speaks to your service experience(s) and prepare a 1 page proposal which includes your thesis statement (note: proposals will necessitate at least an initial level of research) which you will have approved by me. Once approved, you will write a 7-10 page essay (not including references), wherein you will contextualize your experience within the larger body of gerontological research using at least 5 recent academic references (all sources used are to be submitted with your paper in addition to an electronic copy). You are expected to critically discuss this literature and your experiences in light of the broader course content. Of the perspectives/theories discussed in class use, you are to use one to frame your paper, explaining your preference. Failure to hand in your reflective paper by November 27, 2006 (beginning of class) will result in a 0 for this portion of your grade. No Exceptions!

General Guidelines for Writing Assignments

All writing assignments should have a cover page which includes the course identifier, name, and student number. They are to be printed on standard paper, using 12 point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, and be double spaced. Written assignments should reflect mastery of course material. Do not provide a simple summary or overview of material, but rather, strive for a more conceptual and sophisticated development of key ideas and concepts. Failure to correct spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, poor sentence structure, and/or problematic paragraph construction will result in a significantly lower grade. For further information see <http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwsoc/Student/Essay%20Guidelines/Guidelines%202004-05.pdf>

◇ **Final Exam (30% of your final grade)**

Your final exam will be scheduled during the exam period. It will include all materials covered in the course and will be comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Class Schedule*

Date	Chapter/Topic
Sept 9	Intro, Community Service Learning Introduction & Course Overview; What is Old?
Sept 11	Ch 1: Aging as a Social Process
Sept 16	Ch 1: Aging as a Social Process; Ch 2: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Aging
Sept 18	Ch 2: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Aging
Sept 23	Ch 3: Individual Aging
Sept 25	Ch 3: Individual Aging; Ch. 4: Population Aging
Oct 2	Ch. 4: Population Aging
Oct 7	Ch 5: Understanding Older People and Aging Processes: Theory and Research
Oct 9	Ch 5: Understanding Older People and Aging Processes: Theory and Research; Ch 6: Social Structures & the Life Course: Social Inequality and Social Change
Oct 14	Ch 6: Social Structures & the Life Course: Social Inequality and Social Change
Oct 16	Ch 7: Health Status Transitions and Health Care
Oct 21	Midterm Exam
Oct 23	Ch 7: Health Status Transitions and Health Care; Movie: Mr Nobody ; Community Service Learning
Oct 28	Ch 8: The Lived Environment: Community and Housing Alternatives in Later Life
Oct 30	Ch 8: The Lived Environment: Community and Housing Alternatives in Later Life; Being Old ... bring glasses, elastic bands, tensor bandages, cotton balls ...
Nov 4	Ch 9: Family Ties, Relationships and Transitions
Nov 6	Ch 9: Family Ties, Relationships and Transitions; Movie: Still Doing It
Nov 11	Ch 10: Work, Retirement and Economic Security
Nov 13	Ch 10: Work, Retirement and Economic Security; Ch 11: Social Networks & Social Participation in Later Life
Nov 20	Ch 11: Social Networks & Social Participation in Later Life; Community Service Learning
Nov 25	Chap 12: End of the Life Course
Nov 27	Chap 12: End of the Life Course; Review; Paper Due; Movie Discussion Board Opens
Dec 1	Movie Discussion Board Closes
Dec 4-18	Exam Period

*subject to change

Please Note:

1. **Webct email is the best method of contact** with the following caveats: emails will not be answered after hours or over weekends or holidays; outside of the afore mentioned, in most cases emails will be answered within 72 hours; emails regarding class material missed due to absence will not be answered (class mates can be very helpful in this regard)
2. Office hours are by appointment but appointment availability is not limited to office hours ☺
3. There will be NO posting of lecture notes or overheads anywhere
4. This is a Webct supported course so make sure that you have an active account and check Webct frequently for updates, additional readings, grades and important notices

Fall/Winter 2008-2009 Additional Information

1. **Student Awareness of the Accessible Learning Centre:**
Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's Accessible Learning Centre for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus. Guidelines regarding the

consideration of such students can be obtained by contacting the Accessible Learning Centre, ext. 3086, www.mylaurier.ca/accessible.htm

2. For Evening Classes:

“After class call 886-FOOT for a walk or drive home - No Walk is Too Short or Too Long!!!”

3. Academic and Research Misconduct:

Academic misconduct is an act by a student, or by students working on a team project, which may result in a false evaluation of the students(s), or which represents a deliberate attempt to unfairly gain an academic advantage. Academic misconduct includes: please refer to web site:

www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=158&p=8383&pv=1

Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for plagiarism. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.

4. Examination Deferrals:

The academic date section of the 2008/2009 calendar, (web site:

[www.wlu.ca/calendars/section.php?cal=1&s=268&sp=800&ss=1142&y=33#Deferred Examination Policy](http://www.wlu.ca/calendars/section.php?cal=1&s=268&sp=800&ss=1142&y=33#Deferred_Examination_Policy) clearly states the examination date period for each semester. Students must note that they are required to reserve this time in their personal calendars for the examinations. Students who are considering registering to write MCAT, LSAT or GMAT or a similar examination, should select a time for those examinations that occurs outside the University examination period.

For additional information that describes the special circumstances for examination deferment, consult web site:

[www.wlu.ca/calendars/section.php?cal=1&s=268&sp=800&ss=1142&y=33#Special Examinations](http://www.wlu.ca/calendars/section.php?cal=1&s=268&sp=800&ss=1142&y=33#Special_Examinations) of the 2008/2009 University on-line calendar.

The World Wide Web <<http://www.wlu.ca>> version is the up-to-date, official Academic Calendar.