

**Lakehead University
Department of Sociology
Sociology 3513FDE/Gerontology 3513FDE
Sociology of Aging**

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Course Description

Sociology of Aging provides an analytical framework for understanding the interplay between human lives and changing social structures in regards to aging. This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the sociology of aging. Topics covered will include: aging as a social process, aging societies, societal views of aging, myths surrounding aging, social aging, social change and aging, understanding age and aging, leisure, seniors groups, meaning, work and retirement, pensions, social security, older workers, intergenerational contact and kinship, family support, fictive kin, community, personal relationships, ethnicity, ageism, theory, research, environment, health care, elder care, and death and dying. By the end of the course you will have a clear understanding of intersectionality through examination of the advantages and disadvantages of aging individuals and how the experience of aging is impacted by gender, race/ethnic origins, and the cultural milieu one lives in.

Required Texts

Funk, Laura. 2016. *Sociological Perspectives on Aging*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Graham, Janice, E., and Peter H. Stephenson, eds. 2010. *Contesting Aging and Loss*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Additional readings can be found on the D2L site for this course.

Course Objectives

Examine core theoretical perspectives and sociological concepts in the study of aging.
Develop a better understanding of aging and the elderly in Canada and cross-culturally.
Identify social, physical, cultural and environmental factors that affect the aging process.
Identify problems that the elderly may be faced with.
Explore inequalities in individual and population aging and their consequences for individuals, families, communities, and societies.
Understand the intersections of social relations including race, class, gender and aging.
Enhance critical thinking skills.
Enhance research skills.
Enjoy the material!

Course Requirements

Students are expected to regularly check the D2L site and actively participate in group discussions. As well, reading assignments are to be completed for the date they are assigned. The reading list is attached to this syllabus. This course is designed to be interactive and group discussion is a central component of the course.

All times for this course are Thunder Bay time, Eastern Daylight Time.

| <u>Evaluation</u> | <u>Marks</u> | <u>Due Dates</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Examination | 15% | October 19, 2020 |
| Examination | 15% | November 30, 2020 |
| Research Project | 35% | December 1, 2020 |
| Participation | <u>35%</u> 100% | Throughout the course |

Late assignments and rescheduling of examinations must be accompanied by a note from a medical doctor or counsellor. Please refer to [Lakehead University Calendar](#).

Lectures

Each week is designed to be a 3 hour class, not including weekly readings, assignments, or studying for examinations. The three hours is to go over the lecture material, clicking on and reading the links provided, searching for information when requested to do so, watch any videos listed, answer group questions, etc.

Examinations

The examinations will incorporate lectures, class discussions, films and assigned readings. Examinations are not cumulative. Examinations are designed, in such a way, those who have carefully read the required readings, carefully read the links, watched the videos, understood the lectures, fully addressed the discussion questions, and worked to clearly understand course material, should have no trouble answering the questions.

All examinations are at 6.00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time. Everyone will write the examinations at the same time. The examination times are firm, be sure to note them in your calendar.

Research Project

The media is a prevalent influence in North America and has a significant effect on the manner in which we view aging and old age. This assignment is designed to examine the media's portrayal of aging as it pertains to older people. For this assignment you will conduct content analysis on a media source of your choice (television, magazines, etc.). Your analysis will focus on aging and its presentation in the media you are investigating. You are to spend at least 5 to 6 hours watching movies/television shows/documentaries or going through print material. You will incorporate theory, research, and a literature review in your poster. Your literature review is to include a minimum of 6 peer reviewed articles. This is a "doing sociology" assignment, a hands-on assignment which will

provide you with research experience. Going online and finding sources that are a couple of pages in length, which are not peer reviewed, do not constitute a literature review of the topic.

You must cite the sources you use in the body of your poster. Posters without citations will receive a grade of zero. ASA citations are in brackets, appearing after a cited source and include: the authors' name, date of publication, and page number. For this assignment, if you prefer, you can number the citations and include the full citation on a separate page. You are to hand in your coding sheets, as a separate document. A reference page does not constitute citing sources; sources must be cited in the poster.

The research projects will be posted for the entire class to read. There will be time devoted to reading the posters, posing questions, and answering questions. Research Projects are to be posted by 9.00 am on December 1, 2020. Posters posted after 9.00 am December 1, 2020 and before 9.00 am on December 2, 2020 will be docked 5 late marks. Should you submit your poster any time after 9.00 am and before 6.00 pm on December 2, 2020 you will be docked 10 late marks. No posters will be accepted after 6.00 pm on December 2, 2020.

Posters must be submitted in a readable format. Posters not in a readable format will be treated as late posters, with marks docked until they are readable. Should the poster not be resubmitted in a readable format by December 2, 2020 at 6.00 pm, there will be no grade assigned.

There will be a forum set up to post your poster. Classmates can ask questions or make comments simply by hitting reply under your posting and you can make your response in the same way. Responding in this way keeps all questions/comments/responses in one place, which makes it easier for all concerned. You can post your poster beginning Nov. 29, 2020. Comments to posters can begin on Dec. 1, 2020 at any time. Questions/comments must be made prior to Monday, December 2, 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Remember to post your poster in the open poster forum specifically designed for posters. You also need to post your poster in assignments. The poster will be graded in the assignment folder and only you can see the comments and grade in the assignment folder. Should you choose not to submit your poster in the assignment folder, on or before 6.00 pm on December 2, 2020, no comments will be made on your poster, your grade will appear in myinfo.

Google has a number of sites that tell you how to design a poster. Type in academic posters and you will find a number of examples. If you were handing in a hardcopy of the poster it would be on standard Bristol board, which is 22 X 28 inches; this is the size your poster is to be. If you type in how to make a poster online it will bring you to sites that will help you

We will go over content analysis in week 4. The librarian session is designed specifically to help you with this assignment.

Participation

Participation is a significant part of your overall mark. Your participation mark is based on your contribution to group discussions and asking questions/making comments and answering questions/comments on the poster assignment. This entails fulsome responses to group discussions/poster questions/comments; stating “I agree” or “I disagree” without adding why you agree or disagree is not considered a fulsome discussion. Repeating what a group member has said in discussion posts/questions/comments is not a fulsome discussion. Participation means engaging with the material. You are to answer each discussion question in each lecture. While you certainly can agree or disagree with a post, you need to outline your rationale for doing so. Critical thinking is not about opinions. Critical thinking is rational, unbiased, evidence based thought.

If you are concerned you will be repeating what a group member has posted you might want to answer the question offline, cut and paste it into the discussion forum, and then comment on what your group members have said.

Each of you was randomly assigned to a discussion group forum and will work with your group throughout the course. Discussion forums can only be viewed by the members of the group and me. Respectfulness of answers is to be practiced. You do not have to agree with your classmates, you can respectfully disagree. Academia is about discourse and critical thought.

Each question, in each lecture and the questions/comments on posters will be marked out of 4 possible marks, following the list below. Your answers should not only reflect that you have read the material/watched the videos in question, but have thought about and further analysed it. Additionally, you should read the responses of your peers to avoid repeating or copying their answers, as well as to further your group discussion regarding that question.

- 0 Marks: No answer or answer reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the question or content being asked about.
- 1 Mark: Answer reveals you have read the relevant material and provided an answer.
- 2 Marks: Answer shows an understanding of the material being asked about and appropriately addresses the question.
- 3 Marks: Answer illustrates a full understanding of the material and the question, as well as the capacity to engage with the discussion beyond merely answering the question.
- 4 Marks: Answer proves that you have not only understood the material and question, but are able to deeply discuss the sociological relevance provoked by the question and the material.

Discussions are not marked for length, only for content. While each post is read and graded, those who post before 11.00 pm, each Wednesday, can expect a comment on at least one post.

Discussion posts for lectures open at 8.00 am on Monday, with the exception of week 1, which begins on Tuesday. The last posts for discussion questions need to be made by 2.00 pm on Thursday. Discussion posts will close each week on Thursday at 2.00 pm. The poster forum will open, for discussion, Tuesday, December 2, 2020 and will close on Monday, December 7, 2020.

While you are to read all the posters, you are to select at least 15 of your classmates' poster assignments to read in-depth and ask questions/make comments on these. As well, you are to answer questions/comments asked of your poster. Please ask questions/make comments of the posters of your group members before examining the posters of those in other groups. Doing so ensures everyone has questions/comments to address and everyone's work is read in-depth by some classmates. Respectfulness is expected when asking questions/making comments or responding to questions/comments. Questions/comments/responses are to be fulsome. Saying nice colours is not a fulsome comment.

American Sociological Association (ASA)

All assignments in the Department of Sociology are to follow the ASA (American Sociological Association) style guide. The guide can be accessed on the web. Google ASA Style Guide and a number of examples will be available for you to choose from. One example is posted in content.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable and subject to various sanctions. Please see the university regulations section on academic dishonesty in the Lakehead University Calendar.

Medical or Compassionate Consideration

Should you require academic consideration for medical or compassionate reasons, you will need a note from a physician or counsellor. Please refer to the current Lakehead University Calendar for detailed information.

Please use Lakehead Email to converse with me lforbes@lakeheadu.ca . Any notices I send will be through your Lakehead Email account.

As noted earlier on, I will be online often reading posts. Should you need any assistance or have a question I am only an email away and happy to help/answer questions.

The Following is Lakehead University's Policy for Students Engaged in Remote Learning at Lakehead University.

(1) Copyright Compliance:

I understand and agree that all instructional, reference, and administrative materials to which I am given access in this course (the "course materials"), whether they consist of text, still or kinetic images, or sound, whether they are in digital or hard copy formats,

and in whatever media they are offered, are protected in their entirety by copyright, and that to comply with this copyright and the law.

(1) I may access and download the course materials only for my own personal and non-commercial use for this course; and

(2) I am not permitted to download, copy, store (in any medium), forward or share, transmit, broadcast, show, post or play in public, adapt, or change in any way any text, image, or sound component of the course materials for any other purpose whatsoever except as expressly authorized, and only to the extent authorized, in writing, by the course instructor.

I further understand and agree that, if I infringe the copyright of the course materials in any way, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University’s academic values.

(2) Exam/Assignment Integrity:

I understand and agree that:

(1) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must complete the assignments in this course without the assistance of anyone else.

(2) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, or in any other way) to complete any course exam.

I further understand and agree that, if I violate either of these two rules, or if I provide any false or misleading information about my completion of course assignments or exams, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University’s academic values.

Lecture and Reading Schedule

Week 1: Tuesday, Sept. 8 to Thursday, Sept. 10

Lecture: Introduction to Sociology of Aging and Online Learning 1

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Preface and Introduction

Week 2: Monday, Sept. 14 to Thursday, Sept. 17

Lecture: Introduction to Sociology of Aging 2

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 1

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 1

Week 3: Monday, Sept. 21 to Thursday, Sept. 24

Lecture: Dynamics of Population Aging

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 2

Week 4: Monday, Sept. 28 to Thursday, Oct. 1

Lecture Choices and Constraints in Aging: Theoretical Approaches and Sociological Contributions and Researching Aging and Discussion of the Research Project

Reading: Cox, Harold, G. 2005. "Theoretical Perspectives on Aging." Later Life The Realities of Aging. 6th ed. Pp. 38-63. New Jersey: Pearson

Reading: Del Balsom Michael and Alan D. Lewis. 2008. "Chapter 8: Indirect or Nonreactive Methods." Pp. 180-194. *First Steps A Guide to Social Research*. Canada: Thompson Nelson

Week 5: Monday, Oct. 5 to Thursday, Oct. 8

Lecture: Understanding Age and Aging

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 2

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 5

Week 6: Monday, Oct. 12 to Thursday, Oct. 15

Thanksgiving and Study Week No classes

Week 7: Monday, Oct. 19 to Thursday, Oct. 22

Examination Monday, October 19, at 6.00 pm

October 21, at 10.30 am, there will be a zoom session with the librarian. Ms. Gold, professional librarian, for the social sciences, will be focusing on the poster assignment.

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 7

Week 8: Monday, Oct. 26 to Thursday, Oct. 29

Lecture: Intergenerational Contact, Kinship, and Personal Relationships

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 3

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 4

Week 9: Monday, Nov. 2 to Thursday, Nov. 5

Lecture: Work and Retirement

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 5

Reading: Katz, Stephen and Debbie Laliberte-Rudman. 2005. "Exemplars of Retirement: Identity and Agency Between Lifestyle and Social Movement." Pp. 140-160. in *Cultural Aging Life Course, Lifestyle, and Senior Worlds*. edited by Stephen Katz. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Week 10: Monday, Nov. 9 to Thursday, Nov. 12

Lecture: Ageism, Meanings of Ageing and Old Age: Discursive Contexts, Social Attitudes and Personal Identities

Reading: Roszak, Theodore. 2009. *The Making of An Elder Culture Reflections on the Future of America's Most Audacious Generation*. Pp. 253-277. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 3

Week 11: Monday, Nov. 16 to Thursday, Nov. 19

Lecture: Environment and Aging

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 6

Reading: Counts, Dorothy Ayers and David R. Counts. 2004. *Over the Next Hill An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America*. 2nd ed. Pp. 185-217. Toronto: Broadview Press.

Week 12: Monday, Nov. 23 to Thursday, Nov. 26

Lecture: Health Care and Elder Care

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 8

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 4

Week 13: Monday, Nov. 30 to Monday, Dec. 7

Examination Monday, November 30, at 6.00 pm

Posters are due Tuesday, December 1, at 9.00 am

This week is devoted to reading the posters and asking on the posters and responding to questions asked of the posters.

Please note: as you have all the course material available to you, there will be no reviews. You might want to create your study notes as you go through each unit.