

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

Dr. Laurie Forbes
Office: UC 0034
Phone: 343-8966
Email: lforbes@lakeheadu.ca

Fall Semester: 2019
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday 8.30-10.00
Classes are held in: AT 1010
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3.00-4.00

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 or on the library website.

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 attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions. As well, reading assignments are to be completed for the date they are assigned. The reading list is attached to this syllabus. The in-class midterm examination is listed below and is held in class, during a regularly scheduled class.

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Marks</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>
Midterm Examination	25%	October 9, 2019
Research Project	35%	November 18, 2019
Participation	10%	Throughout the course
Final Examination	<u>30%</u>	Set by the Registrar
	100%	

Examinations

Examinations will incorporate lectures, class discussions, films and assigned readings. Exams are not cumulative.

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 will incorporate theory, research, and a literature review in your poster. 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. We will discuss this assignment in detail in class.

Your poster is to be standard poster board size (22 X 28 inches). No posters larger than this will be accepted. The poster is to be handed in rolled up.

The due date of your assignment is listed below. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments are penalized at the rate of 5 marks a day, including weekends and holidays. No assignments will be accepted 7 days after the due date. Please note: assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Assignments handed in after the start time of the class are deemed late and will be penalized with a loss of 5 marks.

NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE HANDED IN ELECTRONICALLY.

Grades

The midterm and your research project will be returned in class. You have two weeks, after the day the midterm and the day the assignment is handed back in class, to come and discuss your grade.

Participation

Your participation mark is based on your contribution to class discussions. This entails engaging in meaningful discussion and handing in signed group reports. Should you choose to chat with your fellow classmates, play games, check your emails, etc. and not to be part of your group discussion you will forfeit your participation marks for the class.

Discussion is an important part of academia. Discussions in this class will be based on principles of respectfulness for diversity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, and socio-economic status. Please refer to the [Lakehead University Code of Student Behaviour](#).

Office Hours

There are two regularly scheduled office hours each week. Office hours are set to provide students the opportunity to stop by if they have questions, concerns, or would just like to say hello. If these times conflict with your schedule we can find an alternative time to meet.

Please Note: I do try to answer email in a timely fashion. I do guarantee a response during my regularly scheduled office hours. I do not discuss marks through email.

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. Search or Google ASA Style Guide and a number of examples will be available for you to choose from.

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.

Technology

The use of phones during class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off and put it away during class. Use of computers is fine, as long as they are used for class work and not to play games, check emails, look at photographs, etc. Should you choose to use computers or other electronic devices for purposes other than taking lecture notes your use of such devices will be curtailed and paper and pen/pencil will be the means to take lecture notes.

Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule Fall Semester 2019

1. Sept. 04

Welcome to Sociology of Aging
Introductions
Course Outline

2. Sept. 09

Lecture: Aging Societies
Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 1
Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Preface and Introduction

3. Sept. 11

Lecture: Aging Societies
Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 1

4. Sept. 16

Lecture: Choices and Constraints in Aging: Theoretical Approaches and Sociological Contributions
Reading: Cox, Harold, G. 2005. "Theoretical Perspectives on Aging." Later Life The Realities of Aging. 6th ed. Pp. 38-63. New Jersey: Pearson

5. Sept. 18

Lecture: Dynamics of Population Aging
Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 2

6. Sept. 23

Lecture: Researching Aging and Discussion of the Research Project
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.

7. Sept. 25

Lecture: Understanding Age and Aging
Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 2

8. Sept. 30

Lecture: Understanding Age and Aging
Reading: Yarnal, Mackay, Careen, Garry Chick, and Deborah L. Kerstetter. 2008. "I Did Not Have Time to Play Growing Up... So This is My Play Time. It's the Best Thing I Have Ever Done For Myself": What is Play to Older Women?" *Leisure Sciences* 30: 235-252. (This is an e-journal that can be downloaded from the library.)
Reading: Zimmerman, Lillian. 2016. *Did You Just Call Me An Old Lady A 90-Year-Old Tells Why Aging is Positive*. Pp. 1-12. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Press.

9. Oct. 02

Lecture: Work and Retirement

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 5

10. Oct. 07

Lecture: Work and Retirement

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.

11. Oct. 09

Midterm Examination

12. Oct. 14 Fall Study Week – No Class

13. Oct. 16 Fall Study Week – No Class

14. Oct. 21

Lecture: Intergenerational Contact, Kinship, and Personal Relationships

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 3

15. Oct. 23

Lecture: Intergenerational Contact, Kinship, and Personal Relationships

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 4

16. Oct. 28

Lecture: Intergenerational Contact, Kinship, and Personal Relationships

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 5

17. Oct. 30

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.

18. Nov. 04

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

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 3

19. Nov. 06

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

Reading: Roy, Carole. 2004. *The Raging Grannies Wild Hats, Cheeky Songs, and Witty Actions for a Better World*. Pp. 207-216. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

20. Nov. 11

Lecture: Environment and Aging

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 6

21. Nov. 13

Lecture: Environment and Aging

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.

22. Nov. 18

Assignments are due at the beginning of class.

All the posters will be displayed and students will have the opportunity to read all the posters and ask their classmates questions about their research. This exercise will count toward participation marks.

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 7

23. Nov. 20

Lecture: Health Care and Elder Care

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 8

24. Nov. 25

Lecture: Health Care and Elder Care

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 4

25. Nov. 27

Lecture: Death and Dying

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 8

26. Dec. 02

Lecture: Social Change

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 9

Please note: If you lose or misplace your course outline or the dog/cat/pet bird eat it you can find one online by going to the A to Z index, click on Sociology, once on the website click on courses and scroll down until you find this course.