

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

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Fall Semester: 2026
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Office Hours: Monday 1.00 to 4.00

Should you need any assistance or have a question I am only an email away and happy to help/answer questions. Please note: I check and respond to emails during my working hours of Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. I will not regularly see or respond to emails outside of these hours.

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.

Important Note: This is a web course. This means the whole course is online. You will find a weekly lecture which includes the discussion questions you are to answer and links which you are to open and read or videos to watch. The exams are written online, in the course D2L site. In a web course there are no zoom lectures, we do not meet in-person, and lectures are not taped.

Required Texts

Two textbooks are required. The approximate textbook costs are provided below and reflect current LU bookstore pricing (prices subject to change). The texts may be available from other sources at reduced prices. Additional short readings will be posted to the D2L course website. Readings posted to D2L are free of charge.

Funk, Laura. 2016. *Sociological Perspectives on Aging*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. New \$99.99, you might find a used copy for less than \$99.99. The e-book version is \$45.99.

Graham, Janice, E., and Peter H. Stephenson, eds. 2010. *Contesting Aging and Loss*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press. New \$48.99, used is \$18.48, and the e-book costs \$40.95.

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

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.

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!

Evaluation

Marks

Due Dates

Midterm Examination	15%	October 19, 2026
Final Examination	15%	Set by the registrar
Poster Research Project	35%	November 30, 2026
Participation	<u>35%</u>	Throughout the course
	100%	

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.

Please note: submitted work (discussion posts, exams, assignments, etc.) may be run through an AI detection program.

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.

To be clear: You must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, recordings, study notes, videos, or in any other way, including course material, texts, etc.) to complete any course examinations. The exams are to be completed solely, without collaboration or assistance of any other person. Your examination answers are to be based on what you have learned in the course and are to be in your own words. Use of AI, including programs like, but not limited to Grammarly is considered plagiarism.

Exams are to be written directly in the space provided, in the D2L exam site. To be clear, no examination answers are to be answered outside the D2L site and cut and pasted into the exam.

The October examination is at 6.00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time. Everyone will write the examinations at the same time. The examination times are firm. The final examination is set by the registrar.

Please note: Time for all students, for the midterm, begins at 6.00 pm and if the exam, for example, is one hour in length, no questions registered after 7.00 pm will be graded. If you have a registered accommodation, for example, to have an additional 30 minutes, your time will be adjusted and you will have until 7.30 to finish the exam. Any posts after 7.30 will not be graded.

Poster 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 for the data required for content analysis. The 6 hours does not include the literature review. You will incorporate theory, research, and a literature review in your poster. Your literature review is to include a minimum of 6 articles, 3 of which must be 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 are to reference your sources and include a separate reference page, listing all the sources used. The coding sheets are to be posted in the assignment folder.

The following link discusses peer reviewed sources.

Distinguish between Popular and Scholarly Journals

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 Monday, November 30, 2026. Posters posted after 9.00 am November 30 and before 9.00 am on December 1, 2026, will be docked 5 late marks. Should you submit your poster any time after 9.00 am and before 6.00 pm on December 1, 2026, you will be docked 10 late marks. **No posters will be accepted after 6.00 pm on December 1, 2026.**

Posters must be submitted in PDF 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 1, 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 November 28, 2026. Comments to posters can begin on November 30, at any time. Questions/comments/responses must be made prior to Friday, December 4, 2026, at 2.00 pm.

Remember to post your poster in the 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.

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. You will be creating your poster online, based on the instructions found in content. You are to use the site posted in the link or google docs to create your poster. There is an example, crafted by former Graduate Assistant, Ms. M. Turner to help you. The headings are there as an example, you do not have to use them.**

You are to use the American Sociological Association (ASA) style guide when formatting your poster. Posters are not double-spaced. You must cite all your sources, a reference page is not citing sources, they must be cited in the poster.

While you can use the textbook in your poster, it does not count as one of the required sources. Images are to be cited and do not count as one of the minimum 6 required sources.

To be clear: you must cite direct quotes, paraphrasing, any idea or thought not your own, including any information taken from online sources. The citations are to appear in the body of the poster, for example, (Smith, 1942: 86). Each citation includes the author, date, and page. All sources are to appear in the reference page. Failure to cite all sources is plagiarism. Use of AI is considered plagiarism.

Posters without citations will receive a grade of zero.

Please refer to the grading rubric, posted on the D2L site.

Do not use “I”, “me”, or “my” in academic work

We will go over content analysis in week 4. The librarian session is designed specifically to help you with this assignment; this session will be held on October 20, at 10.00 am.

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 and then read and comment on what your group members have said.

Each of you is 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. Googling an answer is not a sufficient response. Any outside sources, used in posts, require a citation. While each post is read and graded, those who post before 2.00 pm, each Tuesday, can expect a comment on at least one post.

Interaction is an important part of learning and working together collegially. While you will not lose marks for not responding to group members posts, thoughtful, fulsome responses are duly noted and it can be the case, with the information provided in the response to a group member's post, it clarifies your original answer moving the mark from a 0 to 1, or 1 to 2, or 2 to 3, or 3 to 4. As well, I have been known to use responses to group members to occasionally assign bonus marks.

Discussion posts for lectures open at 8.00 am on Monday, except for week 1 when discussion posts open 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, except for weeks 1, 4, and 13 when posts are due on Friday at 2.00 pm. The following week's lecture will open each Thursday at 2.00 pm for those who want to read ahead. The poster forum will open, for discussion, Monday, November 30, 2026, at 8.00 am and will close on Friday, December 4, 2026, at 2.00 pm.

Reading posters and making comments/asking questions and responding to questions/comments asked of your poster is a peer review process and part of the participation grade. While you are to read all the posters, you are to select at least 10 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. There are no readings assigned for the week November 30 to December 4; the focus of the week will be on reading and discussing the posters.

The participation grades will be calculated weekly, and I will post the total participation grades, to that point, in myinfo, once a month, so you know how you are doing. As the grade will change, if you want to track your participation, record the grade when the participation mark is posted.

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.

As a university student, you may sometimes experience mental health concerns or stressful events that interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily activities. All of us can benefit from support during times of struggle. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events or feelings of anxiety or depression, Student Health and Wellness is here to help. Their services are free for Lakehead Students and appointments are available. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on and off campus at lakeheadu.ca/shw. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do- for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

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

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) Academic Integrity

A breach of Academic Integrity is a serious offence. The principle of Academic Integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with the Student Code of Conduct - Academic

Integrity ("[The Code](#)") - and, in particular, sections 26 and 83 through 85. Non-compliance with the Code will NOT be tolerated in this course and the Code will be adhered to in terms of disciplinary action. The Code provides a full description of academic offences, procedures when Academic Integrity breaches are suspected and sanctions for breaches of Academic Integrity.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) GenAI Use Prohibited

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E. Use of systems including, but not limited to Grammarly are prohibited.

Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments/discussion posts/exams for this course is not permitted. All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

Lecture and Reading Schedule

Week 1: Tuesday, Sept. 8 to Friday, Sept. 11

Lecture 1: Introduction to Sociology of Aging and Online Learning 1 (2 hours)

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Preface and Introduction

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

Lecture 2: Introduction to Sociology of Aging 2 (3 hours)

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 1

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 1

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

Lecture 3: Dynamics of Population Aging (3 hours)

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 2

Week 4: Monday, Sept. 28 to Friday Oct. 2

Lecture 4: Choices and Constraints in Aging: Theoretical Approaches and Sociological Contributions and Researching Aging and Discussion of the Research Project (3 hours)

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

Please note: Wednesday, September 30 is Truth and Reconciliation Day there are no classes. Posts for this week are due on Friday.

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

Lecture 5: Understanding Age and Aging (3 hours)

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

Midterm Examination Monday, October 19, at 6.00 pm

October 20, at 10.00 am, there will be a zoom session with professional librarian. Ms. Gold, librarian, for Social Sciences, who will be focusing on the poster assignment.

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 7

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

Lecture 6: Intergenerational Contact, Kinship, and Personal Relationships (3 hours)

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 3

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 4

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

Lecture 7: Ageism, Meanings of Ageing and Old Age: Discursive Contexts, Social Attitudes and Personal Identities (3 hours)

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

Lecture 8: Work and Retirement (3 hours)

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

Lecture 9: Environment and Aging (3 hours)

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 10: Health Care and Elder Care (3 hours)

Reading: Contesting Aging and Loss Chapter 8

Reading: Sociological Perspectives on Aging Chapter 4

Week 13: Monday, Nov. 30 to Friday, Dec. 4

Posters are due Monday, November 30, at 9.00 am

Please note: there is an extra day added to this week to read and make comment/ask questions/respond to comments/questions on the posters. The discussion post for this week will close at 2.00 pm, on Friday, December 4. This

week will be spent reviewing the posters and asking and answering questions on the posters. There is no lecture and assigned readings this week.

Last Days of Class: Monday, December 7 to Tuesday, December 8

Lecture 11: Aging in Film (1 hour and 21 minutes)

Reading: No Reading Assigned

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.

Please note: It is up to you to determine the 3 hours you want to devote to the class each week. The discussion forums are open each Monday morning and close Thursday at 2.00 pm, with the exceptions of weeks 1, 4, and 13 when posts are due on Friday at 2.00 pm.

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References

Distinguish between Popular and Scholarly Journals

University of California, Santa Cruz

[https://guides.library.ucsc.edu › distinguish-between-pop...](https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/distinguish-between-pop...) Retrieved April 1, 2026.