

**Lakehead University**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Sociology 3515WA/Gerontology 3515WA/Social Work 3515WA**  
**Life Course Studies**

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**Winter Semester: 2016**  
**Class Times: Monday and Wednesday 1.00-2.30**  
**Classes are held in: AT 2020**  
**Office Hours: Monday 3.00 -5.00**

**Course Description**

Sociology of Life Course will examine the social aspects of aging from birth to old age and the differences in experiences due to age, historical periods, sequencing and timing of life events, social change, cultural constructions, interdependence of individual lives and the social milieu the individual lives in, methods for the sociological study of lives, and the role of theory in shaping intellectual understanding. Life Course provides an overview of the sociological approach to the study of lives focusing on the paths and turning points that socially situate individual lives.

While this course will touch upon older adults, the focus of this course will be on the earlier years of life. Exploration of childhood, teenagers, young adulthood, and middle adulthood will be accomplished using theoretical perspectives to examine life transitions. Substantive topics include: life course development, theories, challenges to the life course model, normative and non-normative shifts, childhood, youth and identity formation, dating, leaving home, early adulthood, entering the labour force, getting married, having children, middle adulthood, and later adulthood.

**Required Texts**

Green, Lorraine. 2012. *Understanding the Life Course Sociological and Psychological Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Tilleczek, Kate. 2011. *Approaching Youth Studies Being, Becoming, and Belonging*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Reading package Life Course Studies 3515.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Understand the importance of examining social life from a Life Course Perspective.
2. Recognize the impact of age, historical periods, and the sequence and timing of events on the life course of individuals and groups.
3. Explain life course from a theoretical perspective.
4. Explain how innovation/policy impacts the life course.
5. Improve research skills.
6. Develop critical thought in relation to the life course.
7. Understand methods used to study the life course.

**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 during a regularly scheduled class. The final examination is posted by the registrar and the schedule for this can be found online. It is your responsibility to ensure you know the date and time of the final examination.

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.

**No Assignments will be accepted if handed in electronically.**

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Marks</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>
Mid-term Examination	25%	February 10, 2016
Research Assignment	30%	March 16, 2016
Participation	10%	Throughout the course
Final Examination	<u>35%</u>	Set by the registrar
	100%	

### Examinations

Examinations will incorporate lectures, class discussions, films and assigned readings.

### Research Assignment

You are to choose an innovation, it can be from any historical era, and explain how the innovation impacted on some aspect of the life course. For example, the drive-in movie theatre was invented in 1933 and by the 1970s and 1980s thousands had closed with the advent of television and multiplex theaters. While in operation drive-in movie theatres were popular as a form of family entertainment and a dating venue for teenagers. Today, the nostalgia of drive-in movies, by the baby boomers, has created a resurgence of this form of entertainment. Alternatively, you might choose a policy that changed the life course for numerous people. For example, during World War II, the need for women workers, in Canada, led to the establishment of day care centers. The war's end led to a closure of these day care centers. These day care centers impacted on the life course of those who utilized them and societal views of childcare. What impact did these day care centers have on the life course: working women, the children who attended them, what did their closure mean to the individuals who utilized them and to our view of working women and childcare?

Your paper is to be 8 to 10 pages in length, double-spaced, in 12 font Times New Roman.

### Participation

Your participation mark is based on your contribution to class discussions. This entails engaging in meaningful discussion and handing in 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.

### 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. I am also happy to meet with students outside regularly scheduled office hours, by appointment.

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

### 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. Type in 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 counselor. 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.

## **Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule Winter Semester 2016**

### **Monday, January 4**

Welcome to Life Course Studies  
Introductions, Course Outline

### **Wednesday, January 6**

**Lecture:** Introduction to Life Course Studies  
**Reading:** Green Introduction  
**Reading:** Green Chapter 1

### **Monday, January 11**

**Lecture:** Understanding the Life Course  
**Reading:** Giele and Elder Life Course Research Development of a Field (Reading Package)

### **Wednesday, January 13**

**Lecture:** Understanding the Life Course  
**Reading:** Cain Life Course and Social Structure (Reading Package)

### **Monday, January 18**

**Lecture:** Childhood  
**Reading:** Green Chapter 2  
**Reading:** Tilleczek Chapter 1

### **Wednesday, January 20**

**Lecture:** Childhood  
**Reading:** Green Chapter 3

### **Monday, January 25**

**Lecture:** Childhood  
**Reading:** Tilleczek Chapters 2 and 3

### **Wednesday, January 27**

**Lecture:** Youth  
**Reading:** Tilleczek Chapters 4 and 5

**Monday, February 1**

**Lecture:** Youth

**Reading:** Tilleczek Chapters 6 and 7

**Wednesday, February 3**

**Lecture:** Youth

**Reading:** Tilleczek Chapter 8

**Monday, February 8**

**Lecture:** Life Course Methods

**Reading:** O'Rand The Craft of Life Course Studies (Reading Package)

**Wednesday, February 10**

**Midterm Examination**

**Monday, February 15: Family Day – No Class**

**Wednesday, February 17: Reading Week – No Class**

**Monday, February 22**

**Lecture:** Agency

**Reading:** Gecas Self-Agency and the Life Course (Reading Package)

**Wednesday, February 24**

**Lecture:** Early Adulthood

**Reading:** Green Chapters 4 and 5

**Monday, February 29**

**Lecture:** Middle Adulthood

**Reading:** Green Chapter 6

**Wednesday, March 2**

**Lecture:** Middle Adulthood

**Reading:** Yoshihama Application of the Life History Calendar Approach. (Reading Package)

**Monday, March 7**

**Lecture:** Middle Adulthood

**Reading:** No Reading Assigned

**Wednesday, March 9**

**Lecture:** Middle Adulthood

**Reading:** Holstein, James, A. and Jaber F.Gubrium. 2007. *Constructionist Perspectives on the Life Course*. Sociology Compass. 1. Pages 1-18.

**Monday, March 14**

**Lecture:** Middle Adulthood

**Reading:** No Reading Assigned

**Wednesday, March 16**

**Lecture:** Challenges associated with Normative and Non-normative Shifts

**Reading:** The popular media is full of stories of celebrity divorces. You are to find one story or news report of a celebrity divorce and bring the story/news report to class for discussion.

**Reading:** Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi Ending Relationships Disengagement and Termination (Reading Package)

**Assignments are due.**

**Monday, March 21**

**Lecture:** Old Age

**Reading:** Green Chapter 7

**Wednesday, March 23**

**Lecture:** Old Age

**Reading:** No Reading Assigned

**Monday, March 28 Easter Monday – No Class**

**Wednesday, March 30**

**Lecture:** Death, Dying, Grief and Loss

**Reading:** Green Chapter 8

**Monday, April 4**

This regularly scheduled time will be a catch-up class