

INTRO TO SURVEY OF SOCIOLOGY OF AGING

Soc. 353 Syllabus

Fall 2015

Dr. Chang

T/Th

Dept. of Sociology

10:30-11:45 a.m.

University of Hawaii-Manoa

Saunders 244

I. Course Description

An overview of the major sociological perspectives, issues and empirical research relating to aging in our society is presented in this course. Specifically focused on are: 1/ the major theories of aging; 2/macro factors affecting the aging process; 3/social worlds of the elderly; and 4/ contemporary social issues in health and care of the elderly, particularly in America.

II. Course Objectives

America already has been characterized as a “graying” society as its elderly segments of the population begin to expand, living longer than previous generations. This means a corresponding change in societal reactions toward this particular demographic category, especially in the social policies and programs that affect those individuals.

This course is, thus, concerned with examining the multiple realities of aging primarily in our society from a sociological perspective. Particularly examined will be:

1. the social aspects of aging, including the historical-cultural variations of this life process;
2. some pertinent sociological research on aging and the elderly;
3. the societal and personal reactions to aging, especially the myths and stereotypes that underlie our society’s prejudice and discrimination toward the elderly;
4. the present and future care-giving and insurance programs affecting our elderly and their caregivers inside and outside the home.

Another course objective is that of helping students improve their scholarly writing and use of basic sociological methodologies to research the elderly and those institutions that impact them. To this end, students will be writing reaction papers to stimulate critical thinking and conducting secondary data analysis of published research, case studies (biographical reconstruction based on interviews) and field studies (personal observations) about the elderly and their treatment in society. Students will also be given the opportunity to develop their oral skills as part of the department’s student learning objectives.

III. Course Methodology

This course approaches the sociological study of aging from two combined teaching strategies: first, Chang's "Pathway" approach that emphasizes students' self-discovery about this life process and social category of individuals through supervised peer teaching within a small group or taskforce setting. The second strategy involves their collective use of research methods commonly employed by sociologists to study aging and the elderly, notably, case studies, interviews and field observations. Organized into taskforces, students will be expected to present the results of their research as a panel of presenters and as contributing editors of a journal of aging. All taskforces will be investigating a myth about the elderly and a community-based living arrangement for those individuals, like nursing homes, retirement communities.

This course is designed for those students who are able to work in groups, since their course grade is partly dependent on their collective efforts and peer evaluations.

Audio-visual material will be shown whenever possible and guest speakers will be invited to contribute to the students' better understanding of aging, the elderly and their care in our contemporary society.

IV. Course Requirements

A. Grading

To critically and objectively evaluate students' comprehension of the lectures and text materials, including handouts, speakers' presentations, and videos, grading is based on the following:

1/ a midterm objective exam	25% of final grade
2/ a final, noncumulative , objective exam	25%
3/ a write-up of a community-based alternative living arrangement for seniors w/ pictures & handouts	25%
4/ an in-class taskforce presentation covering literature review of the myth's topic and summary of tf's interviews	25%

A final course grade of "A" is based on an overall average of 4.0. If there are no 4.0s in the class, then those with an overall average of 3.75 or higher may be considered for an "A" for the course.

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There will be **NO** extra credit given to raise exam grades. Exams must be submitted on time unless there is a verifiable valid justification for lateness, like a signed medical/hospital note. A student's failure to participate satisfactorily in taskforce activities (e.g., doesn't attend meetings, return calls, or complete assigned tasks) will be reported to the Professor in writing. That student may be ejected from his/her taskforce or receive either a letter grade reduction or **NO** grade, depending on the extent and quality of his/her contribution as reported by his/her taskforce. An opportunity to make up that portion of the course grade will be restricted to those students with a valid documented reason (e.g., medical or legal).

Student compliance with the University's **STUDENT HANDBOOK** is mandatory, especially as it relates to exams, attendance, civility in the classroom, and plagiarism. **NO** electronic recording of lectures without permission from the Professor.

B. Readings:

Required: Quadagno, Jill. *Aging & the Life Course*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional articles will be distributed during the term as mandatory readings or assignments.

V. Consultation

Meetings with students regarding any aspect of the course can be arranged by appointment or at the following day and times: T 1:30-2:30
Office telephone: 956- 7792 email: deanna@bawane.edu
Office: Saunders 210

SOCIOLOGY OF AGING

FALL 2015

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

DATES	CONTENT
AUGUST	25 Introductions & Orientation
	27 Chapter 1: The Field of Social Gerontology
SEPTEMBER	1 Chapter 2: Life Course Transitions
	Taskforce Activity: myth selection & formation; development of consent form (See handout.) Due: 9/8.
	3 Taskforce Activity: Draft 20-interview questions (See handout). Due 9/15 your typed version.
	8-10 Chapter 3: Theories of Aging
	15-17 Chapter 4: Demography of Aging
	Taskforce Activity: Library research(Secondary Data Analysis): 1/Locate latest copy of HI. State Data Book on our older adults' demographic profiles to find our elders's numbers and distributions by sex, age, & race/ethnic backgrounds. Due 9/24. Typed.
	2/Start your tf's research of any existing literature on your chosen myth topic for your in-class presentation by preparing a working bibliography (See handout.) with a minimum of 10 references (e.g., texts, periodicals, web sites, newspapers, journals, etc.) Due 9/29. Typed too. Final Biblio. of information actually used DUE on day of presentation.
	22-24 Chapter 5: Old Age & the Welfare State
	Video: China's Lost Girls-Lisa Ling Reaction paper to address this question: In light of China's aging population and sex ratio imbalance, do you feel the government's One Child Policy and Families' traditional preference for sons will have to change to help meet the care of the nation's elders? Explain your answer. Typed, 1 pg. Due 10/1.
	29 Taskforce Activity: Pretest your interview questionnaire. Revise if needed.

October	1	Chapter 6: Biological Perspectives on Aging
	6	Chapter 7: Psychological Perspectives on Aging
		Taskforce Activity: Calculate your "real age." (See handout.) Write your reaction to that self-inventory of your psychological age-1 page typed. Due: 10/13.
	8	Chapter 8: Family Relationships and Social Support Systems
		Speaker &/or Video on Elder Abuse
	13	Chapter 9: Living Arrangements
		Taskforce Activity: your visit to a senior residential facility (See handout.) Write up w/ photos due: October 29.
	15	Chapter 10: Work & Retirement
	20	M I D T E R M E X A M
	22	Chapter 11: Health and Health Care
	27	Chapter 12: Caring for the Frail Elderly
		Speaker &/or video –local community senior care
	29	Chapter 13; Dying, Death and Bereavement
		Speaker &/or video-dying w/ dignity and choice
November	3	Chapter 14: The Economics of Aging
	5	Video: Life and Death in Assisted Living
	10	Chapter 15: Poverty and Inequality
	12	Chapter 16: The Politics of Aging
	17	Speaker: AARP of Hawaii
	19	Taskforce Activity: Journal of Aging DUE. Follow specs handout!
	24	Wrap up-Future of Aging in America
	26	Holiday: Thanksgiving

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE ON THE FOLLOWING PRESENTATION DAYS:

Taskforce presentation dates:

DECEMBER 1 I: _____
 3 II: _____
 8 III: _____
 10 IV: _____

17 FINAL EXAM DATE 9:45 A.M. TO 11:45 A.M.

NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR GRADING AFTER 11:45 A.M. WITHOUT VERIFIABLE MEDICAL/LEGAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE REASON FOR LATENESS (E.G., DOCTOR'S NOTE/ COURT SUMMONS /TRAFFIC TICKET).

ALL EXAMS WILL BE KEPT. REVIEW OF COURSE GRADE AND EXAMS WILL BE ON DEC. 22TH.