

SOC 718: Current Issues in Sociology
(Seminar in Aging, Culture, and Health)
(Spring 2017)
(CRN 89447)

Time: Thursdays 2:00-4:30pm

Classroom: Saunders 242

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Wei Zhang

Email: weizhang@hawaii.edu

OFFICE: Saunders 239

OFFICE PHONE: 956-7689

OFFICE HOURS: After class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will give you an overview of the major theories, perspectives, and empirical findings relating to aging in various cultural contexts. This course will begin with an introduction to the classic psychosocial theories on aging (i.e., disengagement theory, activity theory, and continuity theory). Then, the emergence of the positive gerontology will be discussed. Surrounding this new perspective, paradigms and themes such as successful aging, productive aging, and civic engagement will be elaborated. Following this, the role of culture and social policy in understanding the aging process will be emphasized. Finally, the life course perspective on aging and the roles of religion and spirituality in late life will be discussed. Throughout the semester, we will also invite experts on aging and health to be our guest speakers and invite senior citizens to share their stories of healthy/resilient aging with us.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate knowledge of major theories, perspectives, and empirical findings in social gerontology.
- To demonstrate understanding of the impact of culture, structural factors, and social policy on the aging process.
- To identify and analyze data from various sources to conduct independent research on aging and health.
- To evaluate the quality of studies on aging and health in diverse cultural settings.

REQUIRED BOOKS

- We don't have required textbooks.
- All required readings will be posted on laulima before each class for you to read.

GRADING

To encourage class participation, all students are expected to read assigned readings and submit **two discussion questions** to the instructor through email **at least three hours before** each class meeting. Every student will also lead **one in-class discussion**, prepare for a research proposal, and present and submit a final research paper/proposal.

Class participation	10%
Discussion questions	20%
Leading in-class discussion	25%
Research paper proposal	10%
Final paper presentation	15%
Final paper/paper proposal	20%
Total	100%

97.50—100.00	A+
92.50—97.49	A
90.00—92.49	A-
87.50—89.99	B+
82.50—87.49	B
80.00—82.49	B-
77.50—79.99	C+
70.00—77.49	C
65.00—69.99	C-
60.00—64.49	D+
50.00—59.99	D
<50.00	F

Discussion Questions (20%)

All students are expected to submit two discussion questions on the basis of the assigned weekly readings. Questions need to be submitted to the instructor through email attachment in the Word format.

Leading Discussions (25%)

To lead the class discussion, you need to summarize the readings, address the strengths and limitations of those studies, convey your reaction to the topics, suggest future research in the area, and provide discussion questions for the class. You are encouraged to use PowerPoint slides to support your presentation. If you are expected to lead class discussion for that week, you will need to submit a response paper instead of the weekly discussion questions. The response paper should be 2-3 pages, 12pt. font, double spaced, and may answer the following questions about the readings:

- What are the main arguments of the readings?
- What evidence do the authors use to support their arguments? Where do they get their evidence?
- Do you find the authors' arguments persuasive? Why or why not?
- Can you think of any counterarguments that may weaken the authors' main argument?

A good response paper should be a critical review of readings rather than a simple summary of readings.

Research Paper Proposal (10%)

Students are required to write a short research proposal (around 3-4 pages). Your research proposal is due on **the middle of the semester**. You are strongly encouraged to meet with me or email me to discuss your ideas before you complete your proposal. Your research proposal should address your research questions and explain why they are important in the literature. It will include the following major components:

- A research topic
- A preliminary but synthesized literature review
- Literature gaps
- Your research questions and their significance
- Research methods to be used
- A preliminary reference list

Final Research Paper (20%)

There are two options for your final research paper. One option is to write a research proposal. The other option is to write a complete research paper.

For the research proposal, you need to have: (1) a comprehensive literature review that synthesizes your areas of interest in aging, (2) testable research questions that address gaps in the literature, (3) a description of possible data sources and methods that could be used to answer your research questions, (4) a summary of significance of your study and its practical implications, and (5) a reference list. A good research proposal is all about identifying the interesting gaps in the literature and presenting strategies to fill the gaps.

For a complete research paper, you need to have: (1) a comprehensive literature review that synthesizes your areas of interest in aging and health, (2) research questions that address gaps in the literature, (3) a description of data sources and methods that used in your study, (4) a results section that analyzes your major findings, (5) a discussion section that points out the significance and implications of your findings, and (6) a reference list. The ultimate goals of writing a complete research paper would be to present your findings at a conference and/or submit the paper to a journal. In this case, the model for a complete research paper is a published journal article.

Final research proposal/paper grading is based on the following criteria:

- Is the literature review comprehensive, well-organized, and well-written?
- Are the arguments clear and follow a fluent logic flow?
- Are the gaps in the literature clearly identified?
- Are the research questions clearly addressed and manageable?
- Are there clear connections between research questions, methods, and data?
- Are the implications of study reasonable and meaningful?

Research Paper Presentation (15%)

On April 28th (the last day of class), a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation of your final research proposal/paper is required. Grading is based on the following criteria:

- Is the presentation clear and well-organized?
- Are the slides clear and well-written?

- Is your presentation dynamic and interesting?
- Are your responses to class questions adequate?

Course Outline, Readings, and Schedule

Journal articles and book chapters will be provided in PDF format through Laulima. Readings should be done before each class to facilitate class discussion. The following schedule may be subject to change depending on the progress of class discussion.

Lecture 1: Introduction: Population aging in the world

World Health Organization. 2011. *Global Health and Aging*. NIH Publication no. 11-7737.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2013. *World Population Ageing 2013*. ST/ESA/SER.A/348. New York, United States. Retrieved November 27, 2014
(<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.pdf>).

Beard, John R., Simon Biggs, David E. Bloom, Linda P. Fried, Paul Hogan, Alexandre Kalache, and S. Jay Olshansky (eds.). 2012. *Global Population Ageing: Peril or Promise*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2011. Retrieved November 27, 2014
(http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC_GlobalPopulationAgeing_Report_2012.pdf).

Lecture 2: Three psychosocial theories on aging I

Cumming, Elaine, and William Earl Henry. 1961. *Growing Old: The Process of Disengagement*. New York: Basic. (Selected Chapters posted on Laulima).

Havighurst, Robert J. 1961. "Successful Aging." *The Gerontologist* 1:8-13.

Lemon, Bruce W., Vern L. Bengtson, and James A. Peterson. 1972. "An Exploration of the Activity Theory of Aging: Activity Types and Life Satisfaction among In-Movers to a Retirement Community." *Journal of Gerontology* 27: 511-523.

Lecture 3: Three psychosocial theories on aging II

Atchley, Robert C. 1971. "Retirement and Leisure Participation: Continuity or Crisis." *The Gerontologist* 11:13-17.

Atchley, Robert C. 1989. "A Continuity Theory of Normal Aging." *The Gerontologist* 29:183-190.

Butler Robert. N. and Herbert P. Gleason. 1985. *Productive Aging: Enhancing Vitality in Later Life*. New York: Springer. (Selected Chapters posted on Laulima).

Rowe, John W. and Robert L. Kahn. 1987. "Human Aging: Usual and Successful." *Science* 237(4811): 143-149.

Lecture 4: The new perspective of gerontology

Bengtson, Vern L., Elisabeth O. Burgess, and Tonya M. Parrott. "Theory, Explanation, and a Third Generation of Theoretical Development in Social Gerontology." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 52B: S72-S88.

Johnson, Kimberly J. and Jan E. Mutchler. 2014. "The Emergence of a Positive Gerontology: From Disengagement to Social Involvement." *The Gerontologist* 54: 93-100.

Holstein, Martha B. and Meredith Minkler. 2003. "Self, Society, and the "New Gerontology"." *The Gerontologist* 43: 787-796.

Lecture 5 : Successful aging

Rowe, John W. and Robert L. Kahn. 1997. "Successful Aging." *The Gerontologist* 37:433-440.

Rowe, John W. and Robert L. Kahn. 1998. *Successful Aging*. New York: Pantheon. (Selected Chapters posted on Laulima).

Strawbridge, William J., Margaret I. Wallhagen, and Richard D. Cohen. 2002. "Successful Aging and Well-Being: Self-Rated Compared with Rowe and Kahn." *The Gerontologist* 6: 727-733.

Phelan, Elizabeth A., Lynda A. Anderson, Andrea Z. LaCroix, and Eric B. Larson. 2004. "Older Adults' Views of "Successful Aging"—How Do They Compare with Researchers' Definitions?" *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 52, 211–216.

Troutman-Jordan, Meredith and Julie Staples. 2014. "Successful Aging from the Viewpoint of Older Adults." *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice: An International Journal* 28(1): 87-104.

Hicks, Maxine M. and Norma E. Conner. 2014. "Resilient Ageing: A Concept Analysis." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 70(4): 744-755.

Lecture 6: The role of culture

Pruchno, Rachel. 2014. "Remembering Our Roots: A Recipe for the Future." *The Gerontologist* 54: 1-4.

Perkinson, Margaret A. and Samatha L. Solimeo. 2014. "Aging in Cultural Context and as Narrative Process: Conceptual Foundations of the Anthropology of Aging as Reflected in the Works of Margaret Clark and Sharon Kaufman." *The Gerontologist* 54: 101-107.

Liang, Jiayin and Baozhen Luo. 2012. "Toward a Discourse Shift in Social Gerontology: From Successful Aging to Harmonious Aging." *Journal of Aging Studies* 26: 327-334.

Lockenhoff, Corinna E., Filip De Fruyt, Antonio Terracciano, Robert R. McCrae, et al. 2009. "Perceptions of Aging across 26 Cultures and Their Cultural-level Associates." *Psychology and Aging* 24(4): 941-954.

Lecture 7: Native Hawaiian Elders

Braun, Kathryn, Colette V. Browne, Lana Sue Ka'opua, Bum Jung Kim, and Noreen Mokuau. 2014. "Research on Indigenous Elders: From Positivistic to Decolonizing Methodologies." *The Gerontologist* 54: 117-126.

Browne, Colette V., Noreen Mokuau, and Kathryn L. Braun. 2009. "Adversity and Resiliency in the Lives of Native Hawaiian Elders." *Social Work* 54: 253-261.

Browne, Colette V., Noreen Mokuau, Lana Sue Ka'opua, Bum Jung Kim, Paula Higuchi, and Kathryn L. Braun. 2014. "Listening to the Voices of Native Hawaiian Elders and Ohana Caregivers: Discussions on Aging, Health, and Care Preferences." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 29: 131-151.

Braun, Kathryn, Bum Jung Kim, Lana Sue Ka'opua, Noreen Mokuau, and Colette V. Browne. 2014. "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Elders: What Gerontologists Should Know." *The Gerontologist* (doi: 10.1093/geront/gnu072).

Ka'opua, Lana Sue, Kathryn L. Braun, Colette V. Browne, Noreen Mokuau, and Chai-Bin Park. 2011. "Why Are Native Hawaiians Underrepresented in Hawaii's Older Adult Population? Exploring Social and Behavioral Factors of Longevity." *Journal of Aging Research* (doi:10:10.4061/2011/701232).

Lecture 8: Social engagement

House, James S. 1987. "Social Support and Social Structure." *Sociological Forum* 2: 135-146.

Thoits, Peggy A. 1995. "Stress, Coping and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35 (Extra Issue): 53-79.

Thoits, Peggy A. "Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52: 145-161.

Glass, Thomas A., Carlos F. Mendes de Leon, Shari S. Bassuk, and Lisa F. Berkman. 2006. "Social Engagement and Depressive Symptoms in Late Life." *Journal of Aging and Health* 18: 604-628.

Adams, Kathryn Betts, Sylvia Leibbrandt, and Heehyul Moon. 2011. "A Critical Review of the Literature on Social and Leisure Activity and Wellbeing in Late Life." *Ageing & Society* 31: 683-712.

Lecture 9: Social engagement in Chinese societies

Ross, Catherine E. and Wei Zhang. 2008. "Education and Psychological Distress among Older Chinese." *Journal of Aging and Health* 20(3): 273-289.

Zhang, Wei, Huashuai Chen, and Qiushi Feng. (In press). "Education and Psychological Distress of Older Chinese: Exploring the Longitudinal Analysis and Its Subgroup Variations." *Journal of Aging and Health*

Zimmer, Zachary and Hui-Sheng Lin. 1996. "Leisure Activity and Well-Being among the Elderly in Taiwan: Testing Hypotheses in an Asian Setting." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 11(2): 167-186.

Sun, Rongjun and Yuzhi Liu. 2006. "Mortality of the Oldest Old in China: The Role of Social and Solitary Customary Activities." *Journal of Aging and Health* 18(1): 37-55.

Lecture 10: Social Changes and Living Arrangements among Elderly Chinese

Chan, Kam Wing. 2010. "The Household Registration System and Migrant Labor in China: Notes on a Debate." *Population and Development Review* 36: 357-364.

Xu, Ling, Bei Wu, Iris Chi, Hsin-Yi Hsiao. 2012. "Intensity of Grandparent Caregiving and Life Satisfaction among Rural Chinese Older Adults: A longitudinal Study Using Latent Difference Score Analysis." *Family & Community Health* 35: 287-299.

Ye, Minzhi and Yiwen Chen. 2014. "The Influence of Domestic Living Arrangement and Neighborhood Identity on Mental Health among Urban Chinese Elders." *Aging & Mental Health* 18(1): 40-50.

Zhang, Wei, Qiushi Feng, Zhihong Zhen, and Lin Liu. "What Matters to Your Health in Late Life is to Remain Social and Productive: Findings from Survey on Older Adults in Shanghai, China." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*

Lecture 11: Environment, neighborhood, and social engagement

Kawachi, Ichiro and Lisa F. Berkman. 2003. "Neighborhoods and Health." Pp. 1-19 in *Neighborhoods and Health*, edited by Ichiro Kawachi and Lisa F. Berkman. New York: Oxford University Press

Sampson, Robert. 2003. "Neighborhood-Level Context and Health: Lessons from Sociology." Pp.132-146 in *Neighborhoods and Health*, edited by Ichiro Kawachi and Lisa F. Berkman. New York: Oxford University Press

Glass, Thomas A. and Jennifer L. Balfour. 2003. "Neighborhood, Aging, and Functional Limitations." Pp. 303-334 in *Neighborhoods and Health*, edited by Ichiro Kawachi and Lisa F. Berkman. New York: Oxford University Press.

Yen, Irene H., Yvonne L. Michael, and Leslie Perdue. 2009. "Neighborhood Environment in Studies of Health of Older Adults: A Systematic Review." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 37(5): 455-463.

Anneer, Michael, Sally Keeling, Tim Wilkinson, Grant Cushman, Bob Gidlow, and Heather Hopkins. 2014. "Environmental Influences on Healthy and Active Ageing: A Systematic Review." *Ageing & Society* 34(4): 590-622.

Lecture 12: A life course perspective on aging I

Elder, Glen H., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. 2003. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." Pp. 3-19 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York, NY: Springer.

George, Linda K. 2003. "Life Course Research: Achievements and Potential." Pp. 671-680 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York, NY: Springer.

Robert, Stephanie A., Kathleen A. Cagney, and Margaret M. Weden. "A Life-Course Approach to the Study of Neighborhoods and Health." Pp. 124-143 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology (Sixth Edition)*, edited by Chloe E. Bird, Peter Conrad, Allen M. Fremont, and Stefan Timmermans. Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press.

Frytak, Jennifer R., Carolyn R. Harley, and Michael F. Finch. 2003. "Socioeconomic Status and Health over the Life Course: Capital as a Unifying Concept." Pp. 623-646 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York, NY: Springer.

O'Rand, Angela M. 1996. "The Precious and the Precocious: Understanding Cumulative Disadvantage and Cumulative Advantage over the Life Course." *The Gerontologist* 36: 230-238.

Lecture 13: A life course perspective on aging II

Link, Bruce and Jo Phelan. 2000. "Evaluating the Fundamental Cause Explanation for Social Disparities in Health." Pp. 33-46 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology*, 5th Edition, edited by C. Bird, P. Conrad, and A. Fremont. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mirowsky, John and Catherine Ross. 2010. "Why Education Is the Key to Socioeconomic Differentials in Health." Pp. 33-51 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, 6th Edition*, edited by C. Bird, P. Conrad, A. Fremont, and S. Timmermans. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Cockerham, William. 2005. "Health Lifestyle Theory and the Convergence of Agency and Structure." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:51-67.

Gecas, Viktor. 2003. "Self-Agency and the Life Course." Pp. 369-388. in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York, NY: Springer.

Moen, Phyllis. 2003. "Midcourse: Navigating Retirement and A New Life Stage." Pp. 623-646 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York, NY: Springer.

Lecture 14: Religion, Spirituality, and Health

Pearlin, Leonard. 1989. "The Sociological Study of Stress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30:241-256.

Ellison, Christopher G. and Andrea K. Henderson. 2011. "Religion and Mental Health: Through

the Lens of the Stress Process.” Pp. 11-44 in *Toward a Sociological Theory and Health*, edited by Anthony Blasi. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Magyar-Russell, Gina and Kenneth Pargament. 2006. “The Dark Side of Religion: Risk Factors for Poorer Health and Well-being.” Pp. 91-117 in *Where God and Science Meet: How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter Our Understanding of Religion*, edited by P. McNamara. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Sloan, R. P., E. Bagiella, and T. Powell. 1999. “Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine.” *The Lancet* 353: 664-667.

Atchley, Robert C. 2008. “Spirituality, Meaning, and the Experience of Aging.” *Generations* 32: 12-16.

Krause, Neal. 2003. “Religious Meaning and Subjective Well-Being in Late Life.” *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 58: 160-170.

Idler, Ellen, L., and Stanislav V. Kasl. 1997. “Religion among Disabled and Non-disabled Persons II: Attendance at Religious Services as a Predictor of the Course of Disability.” *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 52: S306-S316.

Strawbridge, William J., Richard D. Cohen, Sarah J. Shema, and George A. Kaplan. 1997. “Frequent Attendance at Religious Services and Mortality over 28 Years.” *American Journal of Public Health* 87: 957-961.

The last class: Student Paper Presentations