

**Sociology 353: (Spring 2016)**  
**Survey of Sociology of Aging**  
M,W,F 10:30-11:20 (Saunders 244)

Instructor: Yean-Ju Lee  
Saunders 216 (956-7116)  
Office Hours: M 3:00-4:30  
(or by appointment)  
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## **READING:**

Required Textbook:

Vaillant, George E. 2002. *Aging Well*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company (V)  
Morris, Virginia 2014. *How to Care for Aging Parents: A One-Stop Resource for All Your Medical, Financial, Housing, and Emotional Issues* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). New York: Workman Publishing (M)

More reading materials from other books and journals on LAULIMA

Optional Textbook:

Quadagno, Jill 2008 (5<sup>th</sup> edition). *An Introduction to Social Gerontology*. McGraw Hill (Q)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores the issue of aging from the sociological perspectives. The phenomenon of aging, however, pertains to diverse processes, requiring multidisciplinary understanding based on such areas biology, psychology, economics, and political economy. We will examine issues related to these various aspects of aging, at both the micro and macro levels (i.e., dealing with individual experiences as well as social policy issues).

The course is intended to provide a sociological foundation from which interested students can pursue further academic work leading either to a research career, planning and administrative careers, or a clinical career in the field of social gerontology.

The course offers *a service learning option* where students can volunteer in a long-term care program or for individual care in order to link the concepts and issues in this course with actual, concrete experiences in our community.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLO's)**

- 1) Major sociological theories of aging
- 2) Biological and psychological processes of aging (including, principles of biological aging, health issues, psychology of aging, developmental task over the life course, successful aging)
- 3) Individual experiences and social policy issues related to living arrangement and care receiving/giving (including, community living, group homes, family and friend networks, care arrangement, carer-elderly relationships)
- 4) Individual experiences and social policy issues related to economics of aging (including, employment, retirement, sources of income, public programs supporting the elderly, resource allocations across the generations)
- 5) Considering all these, how to care for aging parents

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Students are encouraged to visit the instructor during scheduled office hours regarding any problems in the course or for the purpose of pursuing topics of discussion beyond what is possible during the regular class period.

Attendance is mandatory. The final grade will be lowered by **one level per two absences** (e.g., A+ to A, B to B-).

Class Presentation: The class will be divided into 10 groups. Each group will make a presentation on Monday explaining/summarizing the materials for the week and will give homework for the class, which is due by Friday. (10%)

Homework: On Friday, homework will be discussed. Written homework will be submitted and the Monday presenters will grade them. Each homework will be approximately single-spaced one-page long. It should be based on the textbook but may require additional references. (10%)

Paper 1 and Presentation (biological and psychological processes): Each student will find *one elderly person as the study subject* and write both papers based on the person. Each paper should be 6 to 10 page long, double-spaced. Paper 1 is about the biological and psychological processes of aging, and it should consist of three parts: (1) the health status of the person, (2) the conditions of care-receiving/giving, and, (3) analysis of those conditions using the life course perspective as well as the scientific knowledge about biology and psychology of aging.

The paper is due by the 7<sup>th</sup> week, and presentation will be done from the same class when the paper is turned in. (written paper and presentation 20%)

Paper 2 and Presentation (Caregiving; economics of aging): Paper 2 is about the issues of social support and economics of aging. Again, the paper should consist of three parts: (1) the status of the person, (2) care-receiving/giving, and (3) analysis of those conditions using the life course perspective as well as the scientific knowledge about social relations and economics of aging.

The paper is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> week, and presentation will be done in the same class when the paper is turned in. (written paper and presentation 20%)

Evaluation criteria for the papers:

1. Amount of information about the study subject: Collect and use as much data as you can
2. Logical flows: Describe the life circumstances in detail (For ethnographic studies, a good description is important)
3. Scientific knowledge about the topic (Use class materials as well as additional materials)
4. Analytic thinking: You should logically relate your observation to the scientific knowledge
5. Clarity in writing: Grammars, expressions, and paper organization

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will be heavily penalized. Punishment may vary by the extent of plagiarism, from lowering the final grade by one letter to failing the course. According to the University of Hawaii Student Conduct Code: “The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials (E7.208, Pages 4 and 5).”

(For the entire Student Conduct Code, see: <http://www.hawaii.edu/apis/ep/e7/e7208.pdf> and [http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/conduct\\_code/UHM\\_Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/conduct_code/UHM_Student_Conduct_Code.pdf).)

**Two Exams:** Two non-cumulative in-class exams will cover the lectures and related readings. The ranges are roughly equivalent to the two papers, where the mid-term (in the 7th week) covers materials of week 1 through week 6 and the final exam includes readings of week 8 through week 15. The exams will include multiple-choice, short-answer, and short-essay questions. (each exam 20% x 2 =40%, or 15%+25%)

**Service Learning Option:** Extra-credit will be awarded to students volunteering for aging-related organizations/activities for 10 hours or more during the semester. The final grade will move up by **one or two levels**.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

(Week)	(Reading)
<b>Part I: Social Gerontology and Sociological Theories of Aging</b>	
Week 1 (January 11, 13, 15)	
Introduction to social gerontology	Q Ch1
Demography of aging	Q Ch4
Life course perspectives; Theories	Q Ch2; V Ch1
Week 2 (January 20, 22)	
Life course perspectives; Theories	Q Ch2; V Ch1
Sociological theories of aging	Q Ch3
<b>Part II: Biological and Psychological Process of Aging</b>	
Week 3 (January 25, 27, 29)	
Biological process of aging	M Ch5; Q Ch6
The body imperfect: Parts I and II (Presentation and HW #1)	M Ch11-12

- Week 4 (February 1, 3, 5)  
 The aging brain; Dementia  
 Degenerative diseases  
 (Presentation and HW #2) M Ch23-24  
 Q Ch11 (first half)
- Week 5 (February 8, 10, 12)  
 Aging well: Developmental tasks  
 (Presentation and HW #3) V all chapters
- Week 6 (February 17, 19)  
 Psychology of aging  
 Matters of mind  
 (Presentation and HW #4) M Ch6; Q Ch7  
 M Ch13
- Week 7 (February 22, 24, 26)  
 PAPER 1 due and PRESENTATION (22,24)  
MID-TERM (26)

### **Part III: Living Arrangement, Care, and Family and Friend Networks**

- Week 8 (February 29, March 2, 4)  
 Living arrangement, housing  
 (Presentation and HW #5) M Ch19-22  
 Q Ch9
- Week 9 (March 7, 9, 11)  
 Family and friend networks  
 Social support systems  
 (Presentation and HW #6) M Ch1-4  
 Q Ch8,12(part)
- Week 10 (March 14, 16, 18)  
 Care receiving and caregiving  
 Caregiving  
 (Presentation and HW #7) M Ch7-9, 25  
 Glenn Ch1

*Spring break (March 21-25)*

- Week 11 (March 28, 30, April 1) Guest speaker and films  
 Aging research in Hawaii (Center on Family, UH)  
 Unnatural causes (SES and health)  
 Dementia and family  
 (Assignment: reflection from the materials)

Week 12 (April 4, 6, 8)  
Access to health care system  
(Last good bye)  
Public programs  
(Presentation and HW #8)

M Ch10,14  
(M Ch26-28)  
Q Ch11(rest); 12(part)

#### **Part IV: Economics of Aging**

Week 13 (April 11, 13, 15)  
Employment, Retirement  
(Presentation and HW #9)

M Ch15-16; Q Ch10,14

Week 14 (April 18, 20, 22)  
Old age and welfare state; Paperwork  
Social Security program  
(Presentation and HM #10)

M Ch17-18  
Q Ch5

Week 15 (April 25, 27, 29)  
Resource allocation across the generations  
Inequality and poverty

Preston  
Q Ch15

Week 16 (May 2, 4)  
Paper 2 due and PRESENTATIONS

Final Exam (TBA)