

SESP 225-203 Human Development: Adulthood and Aging
Northwestern University: Winter 2010

Tue. & Thur. 9:30 to 10:50 AM
Instructor: Carol Gaetjens, Ph.D.
TA: Amy Becker
Mobile: 203 253-3128
Office hours: 11AM-12 PM Tue. Thur. and by appointment

Annenberg G02
c-gaetjens@northwestern.edu
amybecker2011@u.northwestern.edu

Course Description:

Designed for School of Education and Social Policy students, Adulthood and Aging provides an introduction to social policy in an aging society and an interdisciplinary study of adult development and aging, incorporating perspectives from life-span developmental psychology, sociology, anthropology, history and other social sciences. The first part of the course explores *societal aging*, that is, a society where the proportion of older people relative to other age groups is growing rapidly and requires the rethinking of social policies and the reallocation of government resources. The second part focuses on *individual aging*, with an emphasis on cognitive and personality changes in adulthood and later life and on the subjective experience of being “old.” An appreciation of the common patterns as well as the enormous variation in individual aging, by gender, social class and ethnicity is emphasized. Finally, the last section addresses the issue of *ageism* in contemporary Western societies. In combination, these perspectives put a “human face” on the societal and personal challenges that will soon face all of our graduates.

Content Objectives:

1. To introduce students to the contributions of various academic disciplines to our understanding of adult development and aging;
2. To engage students in the process of thinking about social policy issues related to an aging society;
3. To alert students to the process of individual aging that will impact their lives as adults;
4. To make students aware of the tremendous variation and diversity in aging and the experience of old age, by gender, social class, ethnicity, and historical cohort;
5. To acquaint students with the research methodologies as well as the major obstacles encountered in conducting research in adult development and aging;
6. To explain why the results of longitudinal and cross-sectional research on adult development vary so greatly, including the impact history, culture, cohort effects and time of testing have on each type of research;
7. To demonstrate familiarity with the research in the areas of cognitive functioning (intelligence, memory, every-day cognitive competence and wisdom), and personality changes (stage theories, trait theories, activity and disengagement perspectives, life review and gerotranscendence) in the second half of life.

Skills Objectives:

1. To demonstrate a command of basic qualitative interviewing techniques needed for scholarly research including using an ethics protocol statement for interviews;

- 2. To prepare and submit a summary of interviews with young, middle-aged and older adults;
- 3. To serve as a contributing class member of a research team by discussing one's own and others' experiences in the field, analyzing data gathered in all interviews, summarizing findings, and developing tentative generalizations based on a limited sample.

Value Objectives:

- 1. To sensitize students to their own and others' ageism at multiple levels (individual, institutional and societal);
- 2. To reduce the tendency to stereotype and objectify "old people" as a group separate and different from people of younger ages;
- 3. To explore the anxiety held about growing old in modern society;
- 4. To initiate an intergenerational dialog with family members about aging.

Course Reading: (Required) Norris Bookstore.

- 1. Moody, H.R. (2009). *Aging: Concepts and controversies*, 6th Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- 2. Assigned readings will be on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading:

The written assignments for this course include three papers and three interviews. Attendance is taken and used as a proxy for participation (anyone can miss two classes for free, after that points are deducted). The final grades will be determined on a curve based on the number of points you earned out of a possible total of **160 points**. In general, coming to class regularly, doing the readings and turning in your assignments on time will result in an A or B depending on the quality of the work and the improvement shown over the course of the term.

- 1. Class attendance (10) and *informed* participation (10) **20 points**
- 2. Quiz on important concepts **10 points**
- 3. One 5-6 page academic paper taking a position on selected policy controversies concerning Age or Need Based Entitlements in an aging society using the examples of Social Security and Medicare. **January 28 30 points**
- 4. Interview 1: A 2-3 page written summary of a discussion/interview held with an emerging adult in his or her late 20's or early 30's on what was expected and unexpected about living this decade in the areas of work and relationships. Connect to course readings. **February 9 15 points**
- 5. Interview 2: A 3-4 pages written summary of the interview held with a person in mid-life. Connect to course readings. **February 23 20 points**
- 6. Interview 3: A 6-8 page written summary of an **extensive and recorded** research interview with *a person 75 or older*. This must be conducted in person. **March 4 30 points**
- 7. Final paper 6-8 pages. Using the course readings on ageism and your additional outside research, write a formal (academic) paper on whether or not you think ageism is a concern in a field, profession, activity or issue that *interests you* personally. What could be done to change this form of ageism on a personal, institutional, and or societal/cultural level? This paper must display your command of the readings, class discussion, and additional research with appropriate citations and reference list. **March 16 35 points**

Elizabeth Fisher-Pai 11/10/08 12:36 PM
Comment: Do you mean a profession that interests you personally or whether you think ageism interests you personally?

Read this carefully:

School of Education and Social Policy Academic Integrity Statement, March 2004. Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". The first and last papers submitted for this course **must be sent** to the Digital Dropbox in Blackboard **as well as delivered in hard copy. Failure to do both results in your paper not being graded.** Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>. If you need a copy of the booklet visit the SESP Student Affairs Office on the 1st floor of Annenberg Hall.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. SSD also has an excellent website viewable at: <http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/>

General guidelines for papers (not interviews): *All papers* should be well organized, with an *introductory paragraph* that states your general position and the points or ideas you will make in support of your position. Then follow that introductory outline exactly in the body of the paper. The tone of the paper should be academic. Remember your name is on the paper so the reader knows that what you write is what you think, believe, or feel. In other words, *avoid* personal pronouns, "I" and "we" as much as possible.

Formatting: All papers, *including interviews*, should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, size 12 font, *minimum one inch margins* on all sides, and *single-sided*. **Your first and last names must be in the upper right hand header on each page along with the page number on EACH page. Papers without correct headers in the top right corner will not be graded.** All references must be cited in the text in American Psychological Association (APA) approved style and included in the reference list at the end of paper. Don't obsess about this, just do it by following the format examples in the syllabus, the course packet and the APA guideline sheet that is handed out.

Warning: Take a few extra minutes *to read in hard copy* for typos, sentence fragments, misspellings, singular and plural mismatches, repetitiveness and general lack of clarity. If you have a friend who is willing to read it, have s/he do so. Two sets of eyes are always better than one. The spell-check on your computer is helpful but **does not** replace proofreading of hard copy. Careless errors in writing and presentation **detract** from good conceptual work and will be reflected in the grade awarded your paper.

Note: If a paper is due on a class date, *come to class whether the paper is done or not!* No points will be deducted if the paper is received on the day it is due *regardless* of the time. After that time, two points will be deducted for each day late.

Tentative Class Schedule

Guidelines for Reading: In the following schedule the expectation is that you will have read the assigned readings below each date for that class. *An asterisk (*) means absolutely REQUIRED reading.*

Part I: The Aging Society

Class 1: Jan. 5 Key concepts, overview of course, expectations.

Class 2: Jan. 7 The Context for Societal Aging
Moody: Prologue (pp. xxi-xxix)*

Class 3: Jan. 12 An Aging Society: Demographic Trends
Moody: Social and Economic Outlook for an Aging Society pp. 287-317.*

Class 4: Jan. 14 Should Age or Need be the Basis for Entitlements?

Moody: *Controversy #8: Should Age or Need be the Bases for Entitlements?* P. 319-356.*

Class 5: Jan. 19 Age or Need Based Entitlements - continued

Neugarten, B.L. (1996). Policy for the 1980's: Age or Need Entitlement. In *The Meanings of Age*, p 346-354. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.*

Hudson, R. (2005). Contemporary challenges to age-based public policy. In R. Hudson (Ed). *The New Politics of Old Age Policy*, pp 1-19. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press.

Holstein, M. (2005). A normative defense of universal age-based public policy. In R. Hudson (Ed.). *The New Politics of Old Age Policy*, pp. 22-41. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press. *

Class 6: Jan. 21 Social Security and Medicare as examples of Age-based Entitlements

Moody: *Controversy #9: What is the Future for Social Security?* pp. 357-390.*

Class 7: Jan. 26 Health Care in an Aging Society

Moody: Basic Concept II: Aging, Health Care and Society. Pp. 129-161.*

O'Rand, A. (2005). When old age begins: Implications for health, work, and retirement.*
In R. Hudson (Ed.). *The New Politics of Old Age Policy*, pp. 110 -128. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press.

Class 8: Jan. 28 Discussion on Age versus Need-based Entitlements

Due: Paper #1: 5-6 page paper on *Should Age or Need be the Basis for Entitlements?* using the examples of Social Security and/or Medicare.

Part II: The Aging Individual

Class 9: Feb. 2 Setting the Context for Individual Aging

Moody: A Life-course Perspective in Aging, pp. 1-25.

Neugarten, B.L. (1979). Time, Age and the Life Cycle. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 136, No. 7 July, 887-94.*

Class 10: Feb. 4 Young Adulthood

Do our personalities change with age or are they “fixed in cement by age 30?” Are there predictable personality changes in adulthood and late life? Is there a “mid-life crisis?” Do people become more themselves as they age? Are there changes in personality in the very last year or months of life?

Arnett, J. (May 2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55, No. 5, 469-480.*

Settersten, R.A. (2007). The new landscape of adult life: Road maps, signposts, and speed lines. *Research on Human Development* 4 (3-4), 239-252.

Pals, J. (1999). Identity consolidation in early adulthood: Relations with ego-resiliency, the context of marriage, and personality change. *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 67, No. 2, 295-329.

Class 11: Feb. 9 Cognitive Functioning across the Life-span

Cognitive Functioning: Can old dogs learn new tricks? Why does it matter?

What is intelligence and how is it measured? Do people become less intelligent as they age?

Are there distinct stages in intellectual development beyond adolescence? What factors promote high levels of intellectual functioning in late life? Are older people “wiser” than younger people? Do practice effects withstand the aging process (expertise)? Does creativity decline with age?

Moody: Controversy #3: Does Intellectual Function Decline with Age? pp. 93-128.*

Schaie, K.W. (1994). The course of adult intellectual development. *American Psychologist*, 49, No. 4, 304-313.*

Due: A 2-3 page written summary of your interview with a person in his/her late 20's or early 30's on what s/he has learned in the past ten years and what was expected and unexpected from his or her point of view about this period of development in work and relationships.

Class 12: Feb 11 Cognition (2)

Piaget, J. (1962). The stages of intellectual development of the child. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 267, pp.120-128.*

Class 13: Feb 16 Cognition (3)

Carstensen, L. (2007). Growing Old or Living Long. *Issues in Science and Technology*, Winter 41-50.

Baltes, P., & Staudinger, U. (2000). Wisdom. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 122-136.*

Class 14 Feb. 18 Mid-life and Generativity

Erikson, E. (1977). Eight ages of Man. *Childhood and Society*, Chapter 8, pp. 247-274.*

Neugarten, B.L. (1968). The awareness of middle age. In B.L. Neugarten (Ed.) *The Awareness of Middle Age and Aging* pp. 93-98. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.*

McAdams, D.P. & Logan, R. (2004). What is generativity? In E. de St. Aubin (Ed.) *The Generative Society*, pp.15-31. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. *

Stewart, A., & Ostrove, J. (1998). Women's personality in middle age: Gender, history, and midcourse corrections. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 53, No.11, 1185-1194.

Class 15 Feb. 23 Late life

Due: A 3-4 page written summary of the interview you had with a middle-aged person (age 45-60). Is the concept of “middle-age” relevant or meaningful? Discussion

Levy, B. (2003). Mind Matters: Cognitive and Physical Effects of Aging Self-stereotypes.

Journal of Gerontology, Vol. 58B, No. 4, P203-211.*

Tornstam, L. (1999). Transcendence in later life. *Generations*, Vol. XXIII, (4), 10-14.*

Tornstam, L. (2000). Nursing staff’s interpretations of “gerotranscendental behavior” in the elderly. *Journal of Aging and Identity*, Vol. 5., No. 1, 15-29.*

Class 16 Feb. 25 Very late life

Erikson, Joan. (1998). The ninth stage. In Erik Erikson’s *The Life Cycle Completed Extended version*, Chapter 5, pp. 106-114. New York: W.W. Norton.*

Seaver, A. (1994). My world now: Life in a nursing home, from the inside. *Newsweek*, June 27, p.11.

Lustbader, W. (1999). Thoughts on the meaning of frailty. *Generations*, Vol. XXIII(4), 21-24.*

Class 17: March 2 Hospice: Movie “To Live until I Die?”

Class 18: March 4 Discussion of 3rd Interview(s)

Due: Written summary third interview

Part III: Ageism: Positive and Negative

Class 19: March 9

Bytheway, B. (1995). *Ageism*. Pp. 9-14.* (Ageism exists for younger people.)

Palmore, E. (1999). Introductions and basic definitions. Chapters 1 & 2. *In Ageism: Positive and Negative* (2nd). New York: Springer. * (Scan)

Palmore, E. (2001). The Ageism Survey: First Findings. *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 41 (5), 572-575.*

Cohen, E. (2001). The complex nature of ageism: What is it? Who does it? Who perceives it? *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 41 (5), 576-577.

Cruikshank, M. (2003). *Learning to be Old*. Chapter 8 Ageism. P135-158. New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Old woman, sexism and ageism.*

Class 20 March 11

Holstein, M. and Minkler, M. (2003). Self, society, and the “New Gerontology.” *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 43 (6), 787-796.*

Angus, J. and Reeve, P. (2006). Ageism: A threat to “aging well” in the 21st century. *The Journal of Applied Gerontology*, Vol. 25 (2), 137-152.

Final Paper. Due Tuesday **March 16th by 5 PM** in *hard copy* in Amy’s mail box *as well as the Digital Dropbox for this course*.