

Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, Institute for the Life Course and Aging

**AGE2000
PRINCIPLES OF AGING**

FALL 2016

**Mondays, 5:00pm – 8:00pm
Room 218**

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Course Description

AGE2000 is a graduate-level review of the theories and theoretical foundations of gerontology. Gerontology deals broadly with aging in relation to older individuals, aging populations, and with age as a category of social structure. This course will address a broad range of theories and concepts related to gerontology. The application of theories and concepts to practice, policy and research by the student is a major focus of this course. A critical thinking approach to learning will be encouraged.

Goals

The goals of the course are to assist the student in critically examining the following:

1. The different ways of understanding gerontology
2. The strengths and weaknesses of the different theoretical approaches to gerontology
3. The current debates about gerontological frameworks/theories
4. The student's own position about gerontological theories
5. How gerontological theories directly inform the student's research, policy preferences or practice.

Outcomes

At the end of this course you should be able to identify and analyze major theories of gerontology and use aging theory knowledgably in your writing, research and practice. More specifically you should be able to identify the approach you prefer and both its strengths and weaknesses as it suits your profession. Our objective is to get both a broader understanding of gerontological theories and a deeper understanding of a particular area of theory that is of interest to you in terms of your research or practice.

Course Resources

All course readings will be available on the Blackboard course site under the "Course Documents" section. The documents will be accessed by clicking on links that are organized under each week.

Educational Philosophy

Grounded in an adult learning perspective, this course attempts to link theory and research to real-life experience. We believe in an educational approach that fosters a positive working partnership between the instructor and students. Students are encouraged to share their knowledge and experience in various aspects of community and organizational practice.

Learning Environment

This course is conducted with an emphasis on creating an environment that is inclusive and conducive to a positive learning experience. This means that both instructors and students must take responsibility for the learning environment. Positive learning involves gaining and sharing knowledge in a respectful manner just as will be necessary in the context of professional practice. Accordingly, disrespectful behaviour, intimidation and discrimination are unacceptable in the learning environment, just as they are unacceptable in a professional environment. If there are any concerns about the learning environment, students are encouraged to express them to the instructor.

Professional Conduct and Civility in the Classroom

Students should approach this course with the same level of professionalism expected in practice settings and in accordance to your professional code of conduct. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. Academic settings provide freedom to explore new ideas. In the classroom, this allows for opportunities to share perspectives, experiences and ideas and to provide respectful space for those of others. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, sexual orientations, gender identities as well as personal and work experiences. University education also deals with complex and controversial issues which may impact your comfort and safety. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. It is the responsibility of everyone in the classroom to strive toward an environment that values civility, respect and professionalism even if we do not agree. Students are expected to accord their colleagues the respect, sensitivity and confidentiality similar to the environment they would offer in professional practice. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect.

Unanticipated Distress, Mental Health and Stress Management

Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor and seek self-care. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course activities, but students are responsible for communicating their needs. Students may also

experience mental health concerns or stressful events that may lead to diminished academic performance. University of Toronto services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Health & Wellness Partnership through SGS

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Graduate-Counselling-Services.aspx>

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class. Instructors prefer that you receive no messages during class time. If you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager/phone, please set it to vibrate only. Please do not use laptops for anything other than note taking and problem-based classroom learning.

Course Evaluation: Student Feedback Matters

Course evaluations for this course will be completed through an online system. You will receive an email invitation at your **mail.utoronto.ca** email address that will direct you to where you can complete the evaluations for all courses that are in the online system.

The University of Toronto has updated course evaluation procedures to make them more convenient for students. Course evaluations are very important to ensuring the quality of education at this Faculty and informing the development of its curriculum.

The survey used to evaluate this course have been developed in collaboration between faculty and students and the university's teaching and learning experts to ensure that it will provide information about teaching and learning that can be used to enhance and assure the quality of education here at the University of Toronto.

Grading Criteria

The University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy is available at:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Documents/universitygpp.pdf>

It defines the grade scale as follows:

| Letter Grade Scale | Scale of Marks |
|--------------------|----------------|
| A+ | 90 - 100% |
| A | 85 - 89% |
| A- | 80 - 84% |
| B+ | 77 - 79% |

| | |
|-----|----------|
| B | 73 - 76% |
| B- | 70 - 72% |
| FZ* | 0-69% |

*FZ = Fail

Written assignments will be graded on their clarity, comprehensiveness, originality, appropriate use of reference materials and technical adequacy. Papers are expected to be of sufficient quality as to represent your growing professionalism and competence. All written work must be typewritten and in APA reference format.

Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism

Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity, and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. It is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism. Common examples of problematic academic practices that lead to consequences for plagiarism include:

- Copying and pasting from a source and providing a citation but forgetting to put quotation marks around the content;
- Using material from a source and making changes in specific words or sentence structure but not citing the original source.
- Using ideas from a source without citing the original source.

Graduate students are understood to be capable of expressing ideas that are original and distinct from those of the sources to which they refer. The consequences for academic dishonesty are very high at the graduate level; suspected plagiarism is immediately reported to the Associate Dean's Office and referred to the School of Graduate Studies. Please take the time to review your work carefully to avoid these consequences.

Two excellent documents: *How Not to Plagiarize* <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

and the *Code on Behavior and Academic Matters* is available for you to review on the FIFSW web site or at <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/calendar/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx>

Turnitin.com: Students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. Students can upload their papers as many times as they like to review their work before submitting a final version to the instructor. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Late Assignments

An assignment handed in 1-7 days late (up to 5:00pm on 7th day) will receive a one grade point deduction (e.g., A to A-). A paper submitted late beyond 7 days will not be accepted without legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student's control. In this case, a Coursework Extension Form and documentation (as detailed below) is required for late assignments. Please refer to the Faculty website for regulations regarding extensions, late papers, etc. available at <http://socialwork.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-policies/>. Make a copy of everything you submit for course assignments.

Students should make every effort to discuss anticipated late assignments with instructors **IN ADVANCE** of due dates. If you are registered with the Accessibility Office, please ask your advisor to contact the instructor and note the accommodation that is required.

Coursework Extensions

Students may require extensions for classwork assignments on a case by case basis. Extensions should be requested in advance of the due date with usual extension maximum of one week. Download the [Course Extension Form](#) from the SGS website. Your instructor must complete and sign Section 2 of the form. Section 3 of the form must be completed by the Associate Dean/Graduate Coordinator.

Students registered with Accessibility Services will provide a copy of the Accessibility Services Letter of Academic Accommodations with the [Course Extension Form](#).

Students who are not registered with Accessibility Services must provide a Verification of Student Illness or Injury form to the instructor if the extension requested is because of illness or injury.

Absence Due to Illness

Please notify your instructor if illness will interfere with your class attendance.

If illness is likely to interfere with your meeting a due date for an assignment or other requirements, you should have your physician or health care provider complete a Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/getattachment/index/Verification-of-Illness-or-Injury-form-Jan-22-2013.pdf.aspx> at the time of your illness and submit it to the instructor. You must inform the instructor of the illness **on or before** the deadline date.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or Medical conditions

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability or medical condition, please inform the instructor/s so we are able to modify the way the course is taught to facilitate participation and/or use resources available to us, such as Services for Students with Disabilities and Adaptive Technology to facilitate learning. If assistance is required, we will treat that information as

private and confidential. We strongly encourage you to register immediately with Accessibility Services <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca>.

This information will be held in confidence and communicated to instructors with your consent, as needed.

Religious Observances

Please notify the instructor if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements for alternate scheduling of evaluations or make up of missed work.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Writing Style Requirements

Please follow the guidelines in the 6th edition of the APA publication manual for format and citations in your written assignments. This manual is available at the campus bookstore, the library, and the Health Sciences Writing Centre (HSWC) located in Room 344 at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. Please avoid colloquial expressions, proofread all your documents carefully, and employ good grammar. The instructors encourage students to access the Health Sciences Writing Centre if they feel challenged by writing assignments. All assignments must be typed.

| <u>Assignment:</u> | <u>% of Final Mark</u> | <u>Due Date</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Group Application of Theory | 15% | Self-Assigned |
| 2. Life Course Perspective Paper | 40% | October 31 st , 2016 |
| 3. Clinical or Policy Paper | 45% | December 5 th , 2016 |

Note: Electronic versions of papers must be submitted through turnitin.com by 5:00pm on due dates.

Assignment 1: Application of Theory (Self-Assigned Due Date)

In groups of three or four (based on class size), students select a week during the course in which they are responsible for “bringing the theory to life”. The purpose of this assignment is to apply the theory and its concepts – to move the course material from theory and academic discourse towards application – with creative license. Examples of ways to apply the week’s theory/concepts may include: constructing a case vignette, finding a news/media piece depicting a real-life scenario, identifying a piece of policy or legislation (federal, provincial, municipal) to critique, constructing a role play, etc. Regardless of the form of application, the group must develop a class exercise with at least three discussion questions. The class will be divided into three or four groups and the exercise/questions will be facilitated by the presenting group members, respectively. Evaluation will be based upon the extent to which the group develops a way to apply the theory, focus of group facilitation, as well as the originality of discussion questions and the extent to which the questions challenge students’ thinking about the theory.

Assignment 2: Life Course Perspective Interview Paper

Using the life course perspective as a guiding framework, students will interview an older adult (age 65 or older) family member or friend about the older adult's life experiences. Interviews will be conducted in accordance with the approved ethics protocol for this assignment as well as ethical principles described in class and course readings.

This assignment focuses on the life course perspective. The purpose is to apply life course perspective concepts and research to understand the life experience of the older adult respondent. The student should draw on lecture materials, course readings, and their own literature review sources to interpret and understand your older adult respondent's life experience through the lens of the life course perspective. In particular, students should ensure that each of the following five life course perspective principles is applied to their analysis: lifespan development, agency, historical time and place, timing, and linked lives. Key terms and concepts such as trajectory(ies), event(s), transition(s), turning point(s), cohort, period effect, and others should be integrated into the analysis appropriately.

Evaluation of this assignment will be based upon the student's ability to correctly apply life course perspective principles and concepts to understand the older adult's life from birth to present using specific examples from the older adult's life.

A template interview guide will be provided to help guide the interview. However, students should make adjustments to this interview both prior to the interview and during the interview in accordance with their understanding of the life course perspective.

Length: Maximum 8 pages (double-spaced, 12-point size, Times New Roman font, 1" margins). Please note that a minimum of 6 academic references from course materials and/or external literature reviewing is required.

Assignment 3: Clinical or Policy Paper

Clinical Option

Students will be provided with a detailed case description and asked to analyze/interpret the case using course concepts/materials. The case will be provided on November 7th, 2016. Students will be asked to respond to specific questions related to theory and concepts covered throughout the course. The theories used to understand and interpret the case should be gerontology theories covered in the course. However, it is expected that students will also integrate externally located resources to help strengthen the analysis.

Length: Maximum 7 pages (double-spaced, 12-point size, Times New Roman font, 1" margins)

References: Please note that a minimum of 10 academic references from course materials and/or external literature reviewing is required.

Policy Option

Students will select an existing policy at an organizational, municipal, provincial, or federal level that focuses on or targets older adults in community or institutional settings.

Using theory/concepts covered in class, students must:

- 1) Understand the values and perspective underlying the selected policy (what theoretical, political, or conceptual perspective(s) is/are motivating the existing policy?)
- 2) Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the existing policy
- 3) Propose policy amendments or new policy direction altogether in order to help address weaknesses identified in #2.

The analysis of the existing policy and the proposed changes should be grounded in theory/concepts covered in class. The paper should include at least two different theoretical perspectives/concepts covered in class. It is expected that students will also draw on externally located references/resources in the literature to help understand the substantive policy area and to support your policy analysis and proposed changes.

Length: Maximum 7 pages (double-spaced, 12-point size, Times New Roman font, 1" margins)

References: Please note that a minimum of 10 academic references from course materials and/or external literature reviewing is required.

COURSE CONTENT

Articles or links to websites will be posted on the Blackboard course website. Course materials will be accessed at the site by clicking on links that are filed under “Course Documents” for each week.

Week 1: September 12th, 2016

Course Overview

- Introductions
- Group norms and expectations
- Syllabus review
- Why does theory matter?

Week 2: September 19th, 2016

Life Course Perspective

Elder, G.H. (1998). The life course as a developmental theory. *Child Development*, 69, 1–12. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06128.x

Alwin, D.F. (2012). Integrating varieties of life course concepts. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 67, 206–220. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbr146

Hendricks, J. (2012). Considering life course concepts. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 67, 226–231, doi:10.1093/geronb/gbr147.

Week 3: September 26th, 2016

Interviewing and Ethics

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. Chapter 2: Why we do what we do: Philosophy of qualitative interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. Chapter 5: Conversational partnerships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

Chapter 1: Ethics Framework Pages, 5 to 9

Chapter 3: The Consent Process, Pages 25 to 35

Chapter 5: Privacy and Confidentiality, Pages 57 to 64

Approved Ethics Information Sheet, Consent Form, and Survey Guide

Conduct Interview During this Week

Week 4: October 3rd, 2016

Cumulative Advantage/Disadvantage

Dannefer, D. (2003). Cumulative advantage/disadvantage and the life course: Cross-fertilizing age and social science theory. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 58B, S327- S337. doi: 10.1093/geronb/58.6.

Ferraro, K. F. and Shippee, T. P. (2009). Aging and cumulative inequality: How does inequality get under the skin? *The Gerontologist*, 49, 333–343. doi: 10.1093/geront/gnp034

Friedman, M.J., & McEwen, B.S. (2004). Posttraumatic stress disorder, allostatic load, and medical illness. In P.P. Schnurr, & B.L. Green (Eds.), *Trauma and health: Physical health consequences of exposure to extreme stress* (pp. 157-188). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Week 5: October 10th, 2016

Thanksgiving – No Class

Week 6: October 17th, 2016

“Successful” Aging

Martin, P., Kelly, N., Kahana, B., Kahana, E., Willcox, B. J.,..., & Poon, L.W. (2014). Defining successful aging: A tangible or elusive concept? *The Gerontologist*, 55, 14-25.
doi:10.1093/geront/gnu044

Liang, J. & Luo, B. (2012). Toward a discourse shift in social gerontology: From successful aging to harmonious aging. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26, 327–334.
doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2012.03.001

Kahana, E., & Kahana, B. (2001). Successful aging among people with HIV/AIDS. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 54, S53-S56. doi:10.1016/S0895-4356(01)00447-4

Baltes, M. M., & Carstensen, L. L. (1996). The process of successful ageing. *Ageing and society*, 16(04), 397-422.

Week 7: October 24th, 2016

Continuity, Activity, Disengagement, and Socioemotional Selectivity Theories

Pushkar, D., Chaikelson, J., Conway, M., Etezadi, J., Giannopolous, C.,..., & Wrosch, C. (2010). Testing continuity and activity variables as predictors of positive and negative affect in retirement. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, 65B*, 42–49. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbp079

Achenbaum, W.A., & Bengtson, V.L. (1994). "Re-engaging the disengagement theory of aging: On the history and assessment of theory development in gerontology." *The Gerontologist, 34*, 756-763. doi:10.1093/geront/34.6.756

Carstensen, L.L., Isaacowitz, D.M., & Charles, S.T. (1999). Taking time seriously: A theory of socioemotional selectivity. *American Psychologist, 54*, 165-181. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.54.3.165

Week 8: October 31st, 2016

Feminism and Critical Theory

Katz, S., & Calasanti, T. (2014). Critical perspectives on successful aging: Does it appeal more than it illuminates? *The Gerontologist*. doi:10.1093/geront/gnu027

Lynott, R.J., & Lynott, P.P. (1996). Tracing the course of theoretical development in the sociology of aging. *The Gerontologist, 36*, 749-760. doi:10.1093/geront/36.6.749

Silver, C.B. (2003). Gendered identities in old age: Toward (de)gendering? *Journal of Aging Studies, 17*, 379–397. doi:10.1016/S0890-4065(03)00059-8

Week 9: November 7th, 2016

Ageism

Jonson, H. (2013). We will be different! Ageism and the temporal construction of old age. *The Gerontologist, 53*, 198–204. doi: 10.1093/geront/gns066

Martens, A., Goldenberg, J.L. & Greenberg, J. (2005). A terror management perspective on Ageism. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*, 223-239. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00403.x

Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2010). Aging without agency: Theorizing the fourth age. *Aging & Mental Health, 14*, 121–128. doi:10.1080/13607860903228762

Week 10: November 14th, 2016

The Social Construction of Aging

Gubrium, J. (2005). The Social Worlds of Old Age. Chapter 4.4. In the *Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Featherstone, M. and Hepworth, M. (2005). Images of Ageing: Cultural Representations of Later Life. . In the *Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phoenix, C., Smith B. and Andrew C. Sparkes (2010). Narrative analysis in aging studies: A typology for consideration. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 24 (2010) 111

Week 11: November 21st, 2016

Postmodernism and Constructivism

Ray, R.E. (1996). A postmodern perspective on feminist gerontology. *The Gerontologist*, 36, 674–680. doi:10.1093/geront/36.5.674

Dean, R.S. (1993) Constructivism: An approach to clinical practice. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 63, 127-146. doi:10.1080/00377319309517382

Schindler, R. (1999). Empowering the aged: A postmodern approach. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 49, 165-177. doi:10.2190/7RJX-JA4R-A5YB-G3QX

Week 12: November 28th, 2016

The Body and Aging

Twigg, J. (2004). The body, gender, and age: Feminist insights in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18, 59-73. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2003.09.001

Katz, S. (2000). Busy bodies: Activity, aging, and the management of everyday life. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 14, 135-152. doi:10.1016/S0890-4065(00)80008-0

Powell, J. L., & Longino, C.F. (2002). Postmodernism versus modernism: Rethinking theoretical tensions in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging and Identity*, 7(4), 219-226.

Week 13: December 5th, 2016

Final Assignment Due

Course Review and Wrap-Up

Class exercise to facilitate review of course content