

SC 525: Social Gerontology Fall 2009

Wednesday 3:00-5:20 pm
004 Carney Hall

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About the Course

This course provides thorough coverage of current topics in social gerontology. We'll begin the class by discussing theories of aging and the life course from multiple social scientific disciplines. Then we will cover specific topics in four general areas of sociology: roles and relationships (e.g., within the family), inequalities (e.g., ageism), institutions (e.g., health care), and social change (e.g., the aging of the population). By the end of the course, you will have comprehensive knowledge of classic and current social gerontological literature, and you will be able to identify emerging topics of importance for future basic research and applied practice.

Required Readings

Text to purchase:

Mortimer, Jeylan T. and Michael J. Shanahan, eds. 2004. *Handbook of the Life Course*. New York: Springer. (ISBN 9780387324579)

Course reserves online:

Access readings preceded by an asterisk (*) as .pdf files through the library website (<http://www.bc.edu/libraries/>) or through the link on the course Blackboard page (<https://cms.bc.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>).

Assessment

Grading scale

A+	none at Boston College	A	93 – 100%	A-	90 – 92%
B+	87 – 89%	B	83 – 86%	B-	80 – 82%
C+	77 – 79%	C	73 – 76%	C-	70 – 72%
D+	67 – 69%	D	63 – 66%	D-	60 – 62%
F	below 60%				

Task	Due date	Percentage of grade
10 weekly responses	September 16-December 9	50 (5 each)
Class presentation	Choose a class period on September 16	15
Literature review proposal	October 14	5
Literature review	December 9	30

Weekly responses: Starting September 16, there are readings required for each class meeting. After you complete the readings, write two to three pages (typed, double-spaced, spell-checked, one-inch margins on all four sides, 12 point font, no cover page, last name on each page) of summary and reaction. The summary should integrate the week's readings but be concise, taking up no more than a third of the paper. The remaining two-thirds of the paper should be devoted to your evaluation. You may go in one or two of many directions with your evaluation, for example: What were the strengths and/or weaknesses of the readings? How do these readings relate to theories (either from this or other courses)? What research questions occurred to you when reading, and how might they be answered? What are the implications of these readings for social policy and/or professional practice? Do these readings support or contradict popular, "layperson" ideas about the topic? Be creative! If you have another idea for evaluation but are uncertain if it would be acceptable, just ask me.

Writing these responses is intended to prepare you for class meetings, which will be largely discussion based. Through analyzing the readings, you will have developed questions and ideas to talk through with the class. Come ready to talk!

Note that there are 12 weeks of readings but only 10 required responses. I will drop your lowest two grades. You may decide to write every week, or you may skip a week or two—but proceed with caution: Papers are due in hard copy in class, or if you must, electronically by 11:59 pm Eastern time Wednesday, and *I do not accept late papers.*

Class presentation: On September 16, come to class prepared to choose one date to lead class. Most likely, you will work in pairs. You have three jobs: (1) Lead class discussion of the week's assigned readings. (2) Present additional information on the week's topic from three to five additional articles, book chapters, or reputable online sources (e.g., the Census Bureau; BC's Center for Retirement Research). Your additional information should have a focus: For example, perhaps you'd like to explore how race and ethnicity are related to the week's topic, or you are interested in how the topic plays out for elders in other parts of the world. (3) Prepare three discussion questions on your chosen focus, and lead the class in discussing them. It's all right if the class gets hooked on one and you don't get through all three.

I will lead class on September 16 and model what you should do. Your grade will be based on your ability to keep the class on topic, the relevance of your chosen focus, the organization and clarity of your presentation, and the quality of your discussion questions. On the day you present, submit to me any handouts or powerpoint slides you prepare for your presentation, your bibliography of additional sources, and your list of discussion questions.

Literature review: On December 9, you will submit a ~15 page literature review (typed, double-spaced, spell-checked, one-inch margins on all four sides, 12 point font, no cover page, last name on each page) that cites at least 15 readings that were not required for class. Your objective is to either delve more deeply into a topic we covered in class or to review one of the many topics we did not have time to cover in class.

Choose your topic wisely. I hope that this exercise can further your work on an honors or masters thesis or otherwise afford you an opportunity to learn things you will use in your future career. If you want to write on a topic we cover in class, it would be a good idea to choose that topic for your presentation. In other words: Doubling up is good, not bad.

A literature review is like the introduction to an empirical article, except it gives greater detail about prior work and does not present hypotheses to be tested. Christine McPherson's article (under "Family Caregiving") is a good example of the type of paper I expect you to write, although yours need not be as exhaustive. If you wish, I will read one draft of your paper. You will be required to respond to my comments as you would respond to a reader's comments in a peer review; that is, you must either incorporate my suggestions or justify (in text or in a separate memo) why you have chosen not to.

On October 14, submit a one-page proposal including a brief (one to two paragraph) description of your topic and a list of five references you intend to use. Your plans may change as the paper develops, and that's perfectly fine. I just don't want you to write the paper at the last minute!

Academic Honesty

Your work must be *your* words and ideas. When writing papers, use quotation marks around someone else's exact words and identify whose words they are. If you come across a good idea, by all means use it in your writing, but be sure to acknowledge whose idea it is. Do not allow another student to copy your work. Failure to comply will result in (a) automatic failure of the assignment, and (b) a report to the Dean and the Committee on Academic Integrity. For further information, please review the College's policies on academic integrity here: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity>

Schedule

September 9: The Aging Population / Methods of Studying the Life Course

No reading for this session.

September 16: Life Course Theories

*Baltes, Paul B. 1987. "Theoretical Propositions of Life-Span Developmental Psychology: On the Dynamics between Growth and Decline." *Developmental Psychology* 23: 611-26.

*Bronfenbrenner, Urie. 1977. "Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development." *American Psychologist* 32: 513-30.

Elder, Glen H. Jr., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. 2004. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." Pp. 3-19 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

*Erikson, Erik H. 1950. "Eight Ages of Man." Pp. 247-73 in *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton.

September 23: Age Stratification

- *Hagestad, Gunhild O. and Peter Uhlenberg. 2006. "Should We Be Concerned about Age Segregation? Some Theoretical and Empirical Explorations." *Research on Aging* 28: 638-53.
- *Neugarten, Bernice L., Joan W. Moore, and John C. Lowe. 1965. "Age Norms, Age Constraints and Adult Socialization." *American Journal of Sociology* 70: 710-7.
- *Riley, Matilda White and John W. Riley Jr. 1994. "Age Integration and the Lives of Older People." *The Gerontologist* 34: 110-5.
- Settersten, Richard A. Jr. 2004. "Age Structuring and the Rhythm of the Life Course." Pp. 81-98 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

September 30: Age Discrimination

- *Calasanti, Toni. 2007. "Bodacious Berry, Potency Wood, and the Aging Monster: Gender and Age Relations in Anti-Aging Ads." *Social Forces* 86: 335-55.
- *Hagestad, Gunhild O. and Peter Uhlenberg. 2005. "The Social Separation of Old and Young: A Root of Ageism." *Journal of Social Issues* 61: 343-60.
- *Levy, Becca R. 2003. "Mind Matters: Cognitive and Physical Effects of Aging Self-Stereotypes." *Journals of Gerontology* 58B: P203-11.
- *Roscigno, Vincent J., Sherry Mong, Reginald Byron, and Griff Tester. 2007. "Age Discrimination, Social Closure, and Employment." *Social Forces* 86: 313-34.

October 7: Aging Well

- *Carstensen, Laura L., Helene H. Fung, and Susan T. Charles. 2003. "Socioemotional Selectivity Theory and the Regulation of Emotion in the Second Half of Life." *Motivation and Emotion* 27: 103-23.
- *Rowe, John W. and Robert L. Kahn. 1987. "Human Aging: Usual and Successful." *Science* 237: 143-9.
- *Rutter, Michael. 2006. "Implications of Resilience Concepts for Scientific Understanding." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1094: 1-12.
- *Schulz, Richard and Jutta Heckhausen. 1996. "A Life Span Model of Successful Aging." *American Psychologist* 51: 702-14.

October 14: Health Disparities

- * Dannefer, Dale. 2003. "Cumulative Advantage/Disadvantage and the Life Course: Cross-Fertilizing Age and Social Science Theory." *Journals of Gerontology* 58B: S327-37.
- Frytak, Jennifer R., Carolyn R. Harley, and Michael D. Finch. 2004. "Socioeconomic Status and Health over the Life Course: Capital as a Unifying Concept." Pp. 623-43 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.
- *Phelan, Jo C. and Bruce G. Link. 2005. "Controlling Disease and Creating Disparities: A Fundamental Cause Perspective." *Journals of Gerontology* 60B: 27-33.
- *Rieker, Patricia P. 2005. "Rethinking Gender Differences in Health: Why We Need to Integrate Social and Biological Perspectives." *Journals of Gerontology* 60B: 40-7.

October 21: Health Economics

- *Meyer, Madonna Harrington and Pamela Herd. 2007. "The Business of Health." Pp. 95-131 in *Market Friendly or Family Friendly?* New York: Russell Sage.
- *Quadagno, Jill S. 2006. "Why the United States Has No National Health Insurance and What Can Be Done About It." Pp. 201-13 in *One Nation, Uninsured*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- *Quadagno, Jill S. and Debra Street. 2006. "Recent Trends in U.S. Social Welfare Policy." *Research on Aging* 28: 303-16.
- *Svihula, Judie and Carroll L. Estes. 2007. "Social Security Politics: Ideology and Reform." *Journals of Gerontology* 62B: S79-89.

October 28: Family Caregiving

- *McPherson, Christine J., Keith G. Wilson, and Mary Ann Murray. 2007. "Feeling Like a Burden to Others: A Systematic Review Focusing on the End of Life." *Palliative Medicine* 21: 115-28.
- *Noonan, Anne E., Sharon L. Tennstedt, and Freda G. Rebelsky. 1996. "Making the Best of It: Themes of Meaning among Informal Caregivers to the Elderly." *Journal of Aging Studies* 10: 313-27.
- *Robertson, Suzanne M., Steven H. Zarit, Larissa G. Duncan, Michael J. Rovine, and Elia E. Femia. 2007. "Family Caregivers' Patterns of Positive and Negative Affect." *Family Relations* 56: 12-23.
- *Wolff, Jennifer L. and Judith D. Kasper. 2006. "Caregivers of Frail Elders: Updating a National Profile." *The Gerontologist* 46: 344-56.

November 4: Family Relationships

*Allen, Katherine R., Rosemary Blieszner, and Karen A. Roberto. 2000. "Families in the Middle and Later Years: A Review and Critique of Research in the 1990s." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62: 911-26.

*Moorman, Sara M. and Emily A. Greenfield. Forthcoming. "Personal Relationships in Later Life." In *Aging in America*. Vol. 3, *Aging and Society*, edited by J. C. Cavanaugh and C. Cavanaugh. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Putney, Norella M. and Vern L. Bengtson. 2004. "Intergenerational Relations in Changing Times." Pp 149-164 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

Uhlenberg, Peter and Margaret Mueller. 2004. "Family Context and Individual Well-Being." Pp. 123-148 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

November 11: Retirement

*Hardy, Melissa. 2006. "Older Workers." Pp. 202-19 in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 6th ed., edited by Robert H. Binstock, Linda K. George, Stephen J. Cutler, Jon Hendricks, and James H. Schulz. New York: Academic Press.

*Ho, Jeong-Hwa and James M. Raymo. 2009. "Expectations and Realization of Joint Retirement among Dual-Worker Couples." *Research on Aging* 31: 153-79.

Moen, Phyllis. 2004. "Midcourse: Navigating Retirement and a New Life Stage. Pp. 269-91 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

*Szinovacz, Maximiliane E. and Adam Davey. 2005. "Predictors of Perceptions of Forced Retirement." *The Gerontologist* 45: 36-47.

November 18: Religion

*George, Linda K., Christopher G. Ellison, and David B. Larson. 2002. "Explaining the Relationships between Religious Involvement and Health." *Psychological Inquiry* 13: 190-200.

*Greenfield, Emily A. and Nadine F. Marks. 2007. "Religious Social Identity as an Explanatory Factor for Associations between More Frequent Formal Religious Participation and Psychological Well-Being." *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 17: 245-59.

*Idler, Ellen. 2006. "Religion and Aging." Pp. 277-95 in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 6th ed., edited by Robert H. Binstock, Linda K. George, Stephen J. Cutler, Jon Hendricks, and James H. Schulz. New York: Academic Press.

*Krause, Neal. 2008. "The Social Foundation of Religious Meaning in Life." *Research on Aging* 30: 395-427.

*** November 25: Thanksgiving holidays, no class***

December 2: Social Policy

*Doron, Israel. 2008. "Jurisprudential Gerontology: Theorizing the Relationships between Law and Aging." Pp. 643-57 in *Handbook of Theories of Aging*, 2nd ed., edited by V. L. Bengtson, D. Gans, N. M. Putney, and M. Silverstein. New York: Springer.

Leisering, Lutz. 2004. "Government and the Life Course." Pp. 205-225 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

*Pavalko, Eliza K. and Kathryn A. Henderson. 2006. "Combining Care Work and Paid Work: Do Workplace Policies Make a Difference?" *Research on Aging* 28: 359-74.

*Williamson, John B. and Diane M. Watts-Roy. 1999. "Framing the Generational Equity Debate." Pp. 3-38 in *The Generational Equity Debate*, edited by J. B. Williamson, D. M. Watts-Roy, and E. R. Kingson. New York: Columbia University Press.

December 9: Future of the Life Course

Dannefer, Dale. 2004. "Toward a Global Geography of the Life Course." Pp. 647-59 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

George, Linda K. 2004. "Life Course Research: Achievements and Potential." Pp. 671-80 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

Hogan, Dennis P. and Frances Goldscheider. 2004. "Success and Challenge in Demographic Studies of the Life Course." Pp. 681-91 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.

O'Rand, Angela M. 2004. "The Future of the Life Course." Pp. 693-701 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Springer.