SOCIOLOGY OF AGING
SOCIOLOGY 375:A1

Fall 2018
Tuesday Thursday Sept 4 to Dec 6
3:30 – 4:50 PM
TB-95

Instructor:  H.C. Northcott, Ph.D.
Office: 6-25 Tory Building
phone: 780.492.0479
email: herb.northcott@ualberta.ca

Office Hours
I am always happy to meet with students
You are welcome to drop in and visit any time that I am in my office
If you wish to make an appointment to meet with me, please email at
herb.northcott@ualberta.ca

Course Description
From the UofA calendar: Aging as a social and cultural phenomenon. Includes aging in
relation to the self-concept, family, religion, politics, health, retirement and leisure,
housing, attitudes toward death, with particular emphasis on Canadian society.

Prerequisite: No prerequisite.

This course focuses on seniors and provides only limited treatment of aging as it relates
to young adulthood and middle age.

Course Objectives
Learn the conceptual language of the sociology of aging
Explore seminal literature, theory, and research
Analyze social discourses of aging and personal experiences with older people
Textbook


I believe the UofA Rutherford Library has a copy on reserve.

There are used copies of the 8th edition available. Purchasing a new copy of the textbook gives you access to supplementary online materials including chapter summaries, flashcards highlighting key points, a glossary of key terms and definitions, and sample test questions. While these may be helpful, they are optional for the course and are not required.

The text is available as an eBook for less cost than the hardcopy. If you want to buy an eBook, you can do so by going nelsonbrain.com. The supplementary online resources do not come with the eBook. Similarly, the supplementary online resources do not come with previously used copies of the textbook. If you buy a used book or eBook but still want access to online study tools, you can purchase access at a reasonable price at nelsonbrain.com. However, as mentioned above, the online resources are optional and are not required.

Communication

The University advises us to communicate using our ualberta email accounts. Email is the best way for a student to contact me. Please email me at herb.northcott@ualberta.ca from your ualberta.ca account. I will generally answer your email within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

I will communicate with the class using eClass and BearTracks. I will post the course syllabus, powerpoint slides, announcements, and grades on eClass.
Examinations

The examinations will cover both the assigned readings and the classroom material (lectures, DVDs, etc.). There will be three examinations:

- The first examination will be held in class on Tuesday, October 2
- The second examination will be held in class on Thursday, November 1
- The final examination is on Tuesday December 18 at 2 PM place TBA

Each examination will contain 50 multiple-choice questions. The exams are not "cumulative." The examinations are worth 33.33%, 33.33% and 33.33% respectively of your total grade (less if you do the optional essay and/or optional class presentation). Note that the instructor will retain the examination materials. Your midterm grades will be available on eClass. The exams will not be reviewed in class but can be reviewed in the instructor’s office.

Each examination must be written. Because each exam tests a separate third of the course, a missing exam grade will not be calculated as the average of the other two exams. Make-up examinations will be scheduled if you miss either of the two midterm exams because of exceptional circumstances and students may apply for a deferred final exam if circumstances warrant (see note below). If you miss an exam, contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Deferred Final Examination

Please note that students must apply to their home Faculty to write a deferred final exam – instructors cannot grant final exam deferrals. If you miss the final exam and your Faculty grants you a deferred final exam, this exam will be held by arrangement with your instructor. A deferred final exam will not be approved if a student (a) has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or participation are required, and/or, (b) excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work. The deferred exam is scheduled for Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 9 AM in Bus 1-10.

Access to Representative Evaluative Course Material

Example examination questions follow in this syllabus and are representative of the types of questions that will appear on the three examinations for the course. Previous exams are not available.
# Grading Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exams Only</th>
<th>With Optional Presentation</th>
<th>With Optional Essay</th>
<th>With Optional Present’n &amp; Essay</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Examination October 2</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
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<td>Second Examination November 1</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
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<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional In-class Presentation</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Optional Term Paper, due December 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Bonus Points**  
In-class Reflections (4) 2% 2% 2% 2%

Your grades will be added together and calculated as a percentage. Your percentage grade will then be converted to the four-point scale as shown below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<td>Excellent</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>88-92</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>67-70</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>62-66</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58-61</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>54-57</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal Pass</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
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Optional Class Presentation: 3-Minute Talk

You may make a 3-minute oral presentation to the class on any topic relevant to aging. Including class discussion, you will have up to 6 minutes for your presentation. Your assignment is to illustrate, explain, critically analyze, and discuss your chosen topic. You should select a topic that is of interest to you. You should research your topic first by referring to the textbook assigned for this class and then turning to the library and other sources for relevant information.

Your talk should illustrate your chosen topic by reporting on some aspect of aging that you have encountered in your everyday life. For example, you may focus on a personal experience or conversation you have had in the past with a senior or review a book you have read or movie you have seen that deals with aging. You may report on an interaction with a professional who works with seniors, such as a health care provider or financial advisor or tour guide. You may report on a place or organization where you have had a personal experience relating to seniors. This place or organization could provide housing or care or recreation for seniors. You may report on a place where seniors congregate, for example, Tim Hortons or the Mall. Finally, you may examine aspects of popular culture dealing with aging, for example, portrayals of seniors in various media.

Do not conduct a formal interview or observational study with a senior(s). You do not have research ethics clearance to do research with human subjects in the context of the SOC 375 course.

Your 3-minute talk serves two purposes. First, it provides you with the experience of preparing a brief formal oral presentation. It is important to develop the skills involved in speaking to a group. Further, it is not easy to be concise (brief), but it is an important skill.

The second purpose of this assignment is to use your experience and insight to bring academic concepts to life. For example, a speaker may say: My talk today is about seniors in ethnic enclaves and the concept of institutional completeness. Ethnic enclaves are ... and institutional completeness is ... Now let me tell you about my grandmother and the xyz enclave in Edmonton. Or a speaker might say: My talk today is about ageism. I think ageism is widespread and problematic. Here is some evidence to support my argument. Hopefully, these two examples are helpful. Nevertheless, there are many ways to give an effective talk.

In a brief talk, it is not necessary to indicate all of your sources. (This is a contrast to a written essay where you must indicate all of your sources.) Consult sources as needed,
but you don't need to indicate your sources in your talk unless your source is central to your talk. For example, if you are reviewing and commenting on Susan Sontag's article on the Double Standard of Aging or Naomi Wolf's book on the Beauty Myth, you would of course mention Sontag or Wolf.

Your classroom presentation is worth a total of 10% of your final grade. If your presentation has good content (beyond what is contained in the text), critical analysis, and style (that is, you hold the audience’s attention and make the audience think), you will earn a good grade. Grades will be assigned as follows:

- 10% Very effective, outstanding
- 9% Very effective, excellent
- 8% Very good
- 7% Good
- 6% OK
- 0-5% Room for improvement

Optional Term Paper

You may write a 6-page optional term paper on a topic relevant to the sociology of aging. In addition to the 6-page essay, you will add one title/cover page and one page listing the references used in the paper, for a total of 8 pages. (Your optional essay can be based on your optional 3-minute class presentation discussed above). You should research your topic by referring to the textbook first and then turning to the library and other sources for relevant information. You should cite 8-10 different sources and your textbook may be cited and counted as one source (while you may cite your textbook several times in your paper, it would be counted as one source). You may cite academic publications such as journal articles and books, newspaper articles, internet web pages, etc. Do not cite only internet sources (academic articles published in journals that are available on-line are not counted as internet sources). Use a 12-point font such as Times New Roman, double spacing, 1-inch margins, and include page numbers. Your optional term paper is worth a total of 15% of your final grade. This optional paper is due on the last day of classes (December 6) at the beginning of class. Under very exceptional circumstances, papers may be submitted after this deadline if you contact your instructor and he agrees to an extension of the deadline. No paper will be accepted after the final exam. Your paper will be returned to you on the day of the final exam.
Paper Format

Use American Psychological Association (APA) format. Within the paper, referencing should be author (date) or author (date, pp. ##) or (author, date, pp. ##). Consider the following example: Kent (2014) criticized the work of Stonehouse (2006, pp. 220-221) by referring to the strangeman thesis (Doonsebury, 1978, p. 5).

The last page of your paper will contain a list of the references you have used. These should be listed in alphabetical order as follows:


Internet citation: include web page and as much information as possible about the source title and author. Include date accessed.

Reflections

You will be given the opportunity during class time to write your reflections on the topic of aging at the beginning, 1/3 point, 2/3 point, and end of the course. These reflections are optional. If you hand them in, you will receive a bonus of 0.5% per reflection for a total bonus grade of 4 X 0.5% = 2%. You must be present in class on the days that these reflections are completed. There is no opportunity for you to complete a reflection outside of class. Your instructor will present a series of questions in class to guide each reflection.
Additional Notes

The University of Alberta requires the following notes in each syllabus.

Policy about course outlines
Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar.

Academic Integrity
The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at http://www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Recording of Lectures:
Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).
Sample Exam Questions

Your exam is divided into sections labeled as follows:

- According to the Textbook
- According to the DVDs shown in class
- According to your Lecturer and Presentations made in class

1. Exam questions will test your knowledge of demographic and epidemiological trends. For example:

Which one of the following statements is true?

A. Life expectancy increased in the twentieth century
B. Life expectancy decreased in the twentieth century
C. Life expectancy did not change in the twentieth century
D. Life expectancy rose and then fell in the twentieth century
E. Life expectancy fell and then rose in the twentieth century

2. Exam questions will test your knowledge of seminal dates. For example:

In which year was the Alberta Personal Directives Act passed?

A. 1957
B. 1967
C. 1977
D. 1987
E. 1997

3. Exam questions will test your knowledge of the language of the sociology of aging. For example:

“The branch of medicine that deals with the diseases and hygiene of old age” is the definition of which term?

A. geriatrics
B. gerontology
C. gerontocracy
D. gerontocide
E. gerocomy
4. Exam questions will test your knowledge of the findings of selected research. For example:

According to the research of Evans et. al. on health care utilization in the province of British Columbia:
A. health care utilization is increasing for all age groups
B. health care utilization is increasing only for age groups over 60 years of age
C. health care utilization is decreasing for all age groups
D. health care utilization is decreasing only for age groups over 60 years of age
E. health care utilization patterns have been relatively stable showing very little change

5. Exam questions will test your knowledge of selected theories. For example:

Which one of the following sociological theories best explains the concept of reciprocity?
A. structural functionalism
B. conflict theory
C. feminist theory
D. symbolic interactionism
E. exchange theory
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Videos/DVDs</th>
<th>Supplementary Material</th>
<th>Activities &amp; Optional 3-Minute Presentations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Theories &amp; Methods</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Sept 13 &amp; 18</td>
<td>Population Aging</td>
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<td>Aging &amp; Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Health &amp; Aging</td>
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<td>Living Dangerously (52 min)</td>
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<td>Tues Oct 2</td>
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<td>Social Psychology of Aging</td>
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<td>Beyond Memory (76 min)</td>
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<td>Healthcare &amp; Aging</td>
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<td>Bunny &amp; Leona (90 min)</td>
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<td>Income Security in Old Age</td>
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<td>Oct 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Work &amp; Retirement</td>
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<td>Leisure, Recreation, &amp; Service in Old Age</td>
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<td>Acting Our Age (25 min)</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Housing &amp; Transportation</td>
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<td>Nov 8 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Family Life</td>
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<td>Social Support</td>
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<td>Labour of Love (44 min)</td>
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<td>Dying, Death, and Bereavement</td>
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<td>How to Die in Oregon</td>
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<td>The Last Right</td>
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<td>Living with Dying</td>
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<td>Amour (2012, 127 min, on-line)</td>
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<td>The Suicide Tourist (90 min)</td>
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<td>Me Before You</td>
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Revised June 29, 2018