

GERON/SOC4361 (E01) SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY
GERON 5361 (G01) ADVANCED SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

Winter/Spring 2007
Tuesday 6:55-9:35 p.m.
SSB 206

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Office Hours: Monday 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., Tuesday 5:00-6:30 p.m., and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We are experiencing profound changes in demographic, economic, and social trends. This course will investigate how these processes affect aging processes, individuals, families, society, and public policy. Students will be introduced to major theories of aging and will achieve better understanding of the social and culture-specific aspects of aging. In addition, students will be exposed to the development of and nature of U.S. income security programs, health care and long-term care policy, and community services.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Dispute common misconceptions about aging;
- Distinguish between universal and culture specific aspects of aging;
- Be aware of the dynamic interplay between historical and social forces and the individual life course (influence of demographic, cohort succession, period effects, etc.);
- Be familiar with social theories of aging;
- Be familiar with U.S. income security programs and health care programs;
- Have an understanding of the debate about the future of Social Security;
- Become more sensitive towards issues and concerns of older people;
- Understand that aging does not start at 65 - it is a life-long process;
- Enhance critical thinking and improve communication skills (oral and written).

TEXTBOOK: Robert Atchley & Amanda S. Barusch (2004). Social Forces & Aging (10th edition) Thompson Learning, Inc. <ISBN: 0-534-53694-8>

In addition, there are several supplemental readings (available on MYGATEWAY).

COURSE FORMAT:

The course will consist of lectures, exercises, discussions, two exams, and individual research projects. There will be a number of exercises; some will be completed in-class but others will be given as take-home assignments.

Exam Dates: Mid-term Exam, February 27; Final Exam, May 8.

Research Project: You will be asked to select a topic from a list. Upon choosing your topic, you will conduct research to highlight diversity and complexity in people's experience in aging. You will submit a first draft of your research paper on April 3. Your final research paper will be 15 pages (double-spaced with the font size of 12, spell checked, paginated and stapled) excluding tables and figures. Your research paper will be due in class on May 1. There is no page limit for graduate students. More detailed direction of the project will be given in class.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

1. Regular attendance and participation in classroom activities and discussions. Students are responsible for obtaining announcements, notes, and handouts from classes they are not able to attend.
2. Completion of assigned readings before each class.
3. Adherence to mandated deadlines for your work. Exercises and papers turned in after the due date will have a 10% reduction of points per-day delay. The assignments should be completed individually, not in pairs or groups. You are expected to be able to convey your ideas in a cogent and coherent manner in a format specified by the instructor. For example, the organization, grammar and spelling of your written assignments and papers are always included for evaluation.

MAKE-UP EXAMS

Make-up exams will be given only under special circumstances. Students must notify the instructor before, or within 72 hours of, missing an exam and submit proper documentations to schedule a make-up. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in a zero being recorded for the exam in question.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

Your performance in this course will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Two examinations = 55% of final grade (Mid-term 20%; Final 30%)
2. Research project = 30% of final grade (First draft= 5%; Presentation=5%; Paper=20%)
3. Other = 15% (includes attendance, discussion participation, exercises/assignments)

Grading: Since the criteria for a grade may not be understood at first, all students are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have pertaining to a grade that they receive in the course.

Grade	Points	Description
A	4.0	Distinguished/Superior
A-	3.7	Excellent
B+	3.3	Very good
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.7	Above average
C+	2.3	Satisfactory
C	2.0	Average*
D	1.0	Lowest passing scale grade
F	0.0	Failure

*To meet the requirement of the undergraduate school, students must maintain a 2.0 average.

COURSE OUTLINE

The course outline described below is our tentative schedule and subject to change. Students are responsible for keeping themselves informed of any change.

Week 1 (1/16) No class (Prof. Usui will be attending a conference).

Week 2 (1/23) Introduction

What does aging mean? old age? What are major sociological research issues addressed in this course?

Exercise (Facts on Aging Quiz); Exercise (Family Tree & Health History) (due February 6).

Read: A&B, chapter 1 (pp. 1-23).

Week 3 (1/30) Demographic Perspective

How does population aging occur? What are the major social consequences of population aging?

Read: A&B, chapter 2 (pp. 24-43); “Born before 1945”

Class Exercises (US Census Bureau Pyramids, Comparative Aging Quiz or How Long Will You Live?)

Week 4 (2/6) Sociological Perspectives on Aging

What are the major social consequences of population aging, including the age structure of the society, the life course patterns, and family structures? What is the key dimension of adaptation to aging?

Read: A&B, chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 137-185). Movie: Harold and Maude

Your Family Tree & Health History exercise is due.

Week 5 (2/13) Social Status of the Elderly: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

What is modernization? How does modernization affect the status of the elderly? How did the status of the elderly change in relation to modernization in the U.S.?

Read: A&B, chapter 3 (pp. 44-76).

Week 6 (2/20) Family and Social Support

Read: A&B, chapter 8 (pp. 187-234). Your research outline is due.

Week 7 (2/27) Mid-term Exam

Week 8 (3/6) Library Orientation (Class meets at Thomas Jefferson Library)

Discussion of your research outline. Your Budget exercise is due.

Week 9 (3/13) Income and Housing & Social Inequality

Read: A&B, chapter 13 (pp. 337-367) and chapter 18 (pp. 475-497).

Week 10 (3/20) Health Care, Long Term Care, and Community Services

Read: A&B, Chapters 14 and 15 (pp. 368-422).

March 27 No Class (Spring Break)

Week 11 (4/3) Employment and Retirement

How does social structure affect retirement? What causes changes in retirement? What is the relationship between the economy and retirement? How is retirement changing? How does retirement affect women, men, and their family? How does the preparation for and the decision to retirement differ between men and women?

Read: A&B, chapter 9-10 (pp. 235-292). Supplemental reading from the National Center on Women and Aging.

First Draft of Your Research Paper is due.

Week 12(4/10) The Economy and Social Security Controversy

How does the U.S. provide for the increasing costs of supporting older persons? How is American society responding to the Social Security crisis? How has the politics of aging affected the nature of the debate?

Read: A&B, chapter 17 (pp. 450-473) and chapter 19 (498-522).

Week13 (4/17) The Economy and Social Security Controversy (continued)

Read: A&B, chapter 17 (pp. 450-473) and chapter 19 (498-522).

Week 14 (4/24) Student Research Presentations**Week 15 (5/1) Student Research Presentations****Research Paper Due**

Final Exam: 7:45-9:45 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, 2007

ACADEMIC HONESTY

This course adheres to the standards of academic integrity established by the University (http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.htm). Academic honesty is essential for the intellectual life of the University. Faculty members expect high standards of academic honesty in all student work. Students have a special obligation to adhere to such standards. In all cases of academic dishonesty, the instructor shall make an academic judgment about the student's grade on that work and in that course. **The instructor shall report the alleged academic dishonesty to the Primary Administrative Officer.**

The term **cheating** includes but is not limited to: (i) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (ii) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (iii) acquisition or possession without permission of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; or (iv) knowingly providing any unauthorized assistance to another student on quizzes, tests, or examinations.

The term **plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to: (i) use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference; (ii) unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other

academic materials; or (iii) unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.

CLASS CONDUCT

Any successful learning experience requires the mutual respect of the student and the instructor. No behavior is allowed that is in any way distracting, disruptive or rude. Distracting, disruptive or rude behavior includes the following: receiving beeper or cell phone calls during class, leaving early or coming to class late, leaving the classroom for bathroom during lecture, eating in class, talking out of turn, whispering or giggling during lecture, doing assignments for other classes, use of the computer that is not related to class, reading the newspaper, sleeping, and engaging in other activities that distract from the instructor and the classroom learning experience.

Students are expected to attend class regularly, come to class on time and stay until the class is dismissed. Late arrivals and early departures demonstrate a lack of concern for the instructor and your classmates. It is your responsibility to arrange your schedule to allow you to attend the class. Excessive disruptions, from whatever source or for whatever reason, will not be tolerated.

If you need to arrive late to class or leave early, or if you need to leave during class for bathroom for medical reasons, you should notify your instructor.

About Your Instructor:

Dr. Chikako Usui is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Graduate Programs in Gerontology at UM-St. Louis. She specializes in the areas of comparative social policies (such as pension and health care policies), sociology of aging, Japanese political economy, and gender studies. Dr. Usui received her Ph. D. in sociology from Stanford University in 1988. She has taught at Tulane University (1987-91), Imperial University (London) (1999), University of Zurich (2000), and Duquesne University (2004-2006). She is currently working on research that examines labor migration in East Asia (in particular, China, Korea, and Japan) and worker commitment in Thailand. Her recent publications include “Japan’s Demographic Future and the Challenge of Foreign Workers” in **Local Citizenship in Recent Countries of Immigration** (edited by T. Tsuda) (by Lexington Books, 2006); “Japan's Frozen Future: Why Are Women Withholding Their Investment in Work and Family?” in **Japanese Women: Lineage and Legacies** (edited by Amy Thernstrom) (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005); “Continuity and Change in Paths to Political Office in Japan” **Asian Business & Management** Vol. 3, No. 4 (December): 395-416, 2004; and **Amakudari: The Hidden Fabric of Japan's Economy** (with R. Colignon) by Cornell University Press, 2003.