

SOCI 4399.001: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING Spring 2008

DAYS & TIMES: Mon, Weds, Fri, 2 to 2:50pm

LOCATION: Fondren Science 155

INSTRUCTOR: Dr JM Cruz, (Sociology Department, #325 Heroy Hall)

OFFICE HOURS: Mon, Weds, Fri, 12 to 150pm. 214.768.4852. jmcruz@smu.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- ❖ Quadagno, Jill. 2008. *Aging and the Life Course: An Introduction to Social Gerontology*, 4th ed. NY: McGraw Hill. [text]
- ❖ Arber, Sara, Davidson, Kate, and Jay Ginn (eds). 2003. *Gender and Ageing: Changing Roles and Relationships*. PA: Open University Press. [Arber]
- ❖ Riggs, Karen. 2004. *Granny at Work: Aging and New Technology on the Job in America*. NY: Routledge. [Riggs]
- ❖ Snowdon, David. 2001. *Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us About Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives*. NY: Bantam Books [Snowden]

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is an introduction to the sociological process of aging. Here we will address not only the “population explosion” (i.e. the demography of aging), but we will also examine our US culture and the aging process within that milieu.

The objectives of this course are:

- ❖ to help students hone their sociological imaginations as they relate to the aging process;
- ❖ to introduce aging related sociological concepts and theories and illustrate their practical applications to daily life;
- ❖ to engage in a dialogue about the social construction of age;
- ❖ to enable students to think critically and utilize their writing skills with various written assignments;
- ❖ to engage students in civic/volunteer participation;
- ❖ to have students practice their data collection/data analysis skills;
- ❖ to get students to recognize the power of the socialization process as it relates to aging in our particular society;
- ❖ to introduce students to research related aging articles/data.

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION:

Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. Yet men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. ... The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. ... The first fruit of this imagination--and the first lesson of the social science that embodies it--is the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within this period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. ... We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence (Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 1959:3-10).

CLASS ORGANIZATION AND ATTENDANCE:

Very generally I organize my classes and teach via the Socratic Method. Thus, while I do have a lecture and particular points to cover during each session, I often use the question/answer format to draw students into the discussion and to get those points across. Students are expected to read each book chapter and contribute to the class discussion. If you are not prepared discussion is impossible. Come prepared.

Again, students are expected to read each chapter and come to class prepared. I will primarily carry the class on lecture days; however I do ask questions about particular examples in the text or alternatives to a particular perspective. If students are unprepared you will be unable to respond, and that never makes for a productive teaching/learning environment.

On our “discussion” days, you should come ready to discuss the readings in [Arber], [Riggs], and [Snowdon] with what are noted in your tentative schedule as “Talking Notes.” In particular, I would like students to come with notes from the reading including the following:

- ❖ summary of the reading (1 paragraph)

- ❖ main point of the reading (1 sentence)
- ❖ statements about what you learned (3-5 sentences)
- ❖ examples beyond the reading of a particular theory or concept/idea (2-3 examples)
- ❖ criticism of the reading; was it enjoyable or not? support your assertion (1 paragraph)

***Please note these are not taken up nor graded, however if we get to the point where students are not doing the reading or having these notes on our discussion days, I will begin making them required and will incorporate their grade into the grading scale.**

Discussion days will begin with a student volunteering to share his/her talking notes. I will not lecture on these days and there are no PowerPoint slides for these readings. Students will have to take notes on their own to learn the material and prepare for exams.

Cake Days: In a senior level undergraduate class related to aging I think we should have cake as often as we can- in recognition of various birthdays, and have informal (or formal depending on whether I make an assignment) discussions about age, the aging process, various articles I have asked you to read for class, or your civic/volunteer participation. Please note these are not days meant for you to skip or come unprepared. I will always have something to discuss and you should be prepared to do this.

I use Blackboard. Be aware of your university ID. Grades and assignment specifics are at <https://cmsbb2.systems.smu.edu/webapps/login/>. Your login name should be your student ID number. If you are unaware of your ID number or have problems logging in call 214.768.HELP. Please note that email is generated in Blackboard and students are responsible for the information in my email messages. If you do not receive email messages you need to make sure the email address in Blackboard is the one you check regularly.

Lectures are delivered over each text chapter with the aid of PowerPoint. These lectures/files will be available on Blackboard for you to download.

I believe in starting class on time, so do not be late. This class begins at 2pm and runs until 2:50pm. Please get here on time and plan to stay the entire period. Missing part of the class will result in an absence. (Schedule medical appointments and travel arrangements on your own time or you will be counted absent.)

There is a strong correlation between doing well in class and having good attendance. And because I want everyone to do well, there is an attendance policy. Students may miss 3 classes (for any reason including illness or death in the family) and still receive an A (95). **Missing 4 classes is a B/85, 5 is a C/75, and missing 6 means you will be dropped from the course.** (Missing 0 earns 100; and missing 1-3 is a 95.) Please do not call or email to let me know you are not going to be in class. I do not need to know why you miss class, as there are no "excused absences" other than those related to University sponsored/sanctioned events or religious observances. (Do not call or email asking what you missed either.)

Students are responsible for attending each class period and for getting notes from someone else in class in the event of an absence. **If you have work, family, or health issues that may keep you from attending class regularly, then seriously consider dropping and taking this course at a more convenient time.**

*NOTE: There are absolutely NO concessions made at the 6th absence. A student will be dropped with no questions asked regardless of current grade or time left in the semester. If it is past the drop date (April 4) 6 or more absences results in the grade of 0 for attendance.

*NOTE ALSO: Your attendance grade is 10% of your final course grade.

EXAMS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND GRADING SCALE:

Students are tested three times. Tests are made up of true/false, multiple choice, and essay questions. On exam day, students should be in their seats and taking the exam at least 15 minutes into the class period. If a student shows up later than this, he or she is required to take a make-up. ***Please note that make-up exams are all essay and are given during the last week of class. They are ONLY given in the event of a UNIVERSITY SPONSORED AND DOCUMENTED excused absence. If you miss, be prepared to provide proof for having done so. It is in your best interest to not miss an exam.** (Prior arrangements can be made on an individual basis if you will be absent on exam day and you know that ahead of time.) Also on exam day students are free to leave after finishing the test. There are no test reviews. Exams generally cover concepts and themes addressed in the texts, class lectures/discussions, and *.ppt slides.

I believe that students learn sociology better when they think critically, process the information, and write about readings, movies, lectures, their own socialization, etc. Thus, writing assignments weigh more heavily in my classes than exams do. In addition to exams, students are required to do the following assignments:

- 1) Students will do 10 hours of civic/volunteer work at an assisted living facility. The assignment particulars are noted elsewhere, however this assignment will comprise 40% of your total grade, as the 10 hours itself is worth 10% (100 points), notes are worth 10% (100 points) and the paper is worth 20% (100 points times 2). The length of notes will vary but will probably be about 3-5 typed pages per hour spent in the field; and the final paper should be 5-7 pages. The hours need to be completed by 3.31.08, with the paper being turned in 4.04.08.
- 2) Aging paper- This is a research paper on the aging related topic of your choice. I want students to turn in their topics on Friday, 3.28.08 so that I know what you are planning to write about. Assignment specifics are noted at the end of the syllabus. This is worth 100 points and is due on 4.18.08. (5-7 pages)
- 3) You will also write a short (3-4 pages) paper on a film watched in class. This is worth 100 points. Guidelines are noted elsewhere and the paper is due on 4.30.08.

GRADING SCALE:		LETTER GRADES	
Your final grade is based on the following:		A 94%+	C 74-76%
Attendance	10%	A- 90-93%	C- 70-73%
Civic Participation paper	20%	B+ 87-89%	D+ 67-69%
Civic Participation hours	10%	B 84-86%	D 64-66%
Civic Participation notes	10%	B- 80-83%	D- 60-63%
Film paper	10%	C+ 77-79%	F 59% and below
Aging paper	10%		
Tests (3 at 100 points/10% each)	30%		

COURSE POLICIES:

Students need to plan ahead regarding due dates and workload. **Absolutely no exceptions are made for late work.** All assignments are due in class on the due date, and you will receive a 0 for anything not turned in then, despite various life events that might occur (computer problems, an auto accident, oversleeping, deaths in the family, relationship breakups, or other personal tragedies. If you are plagued by bad luck recognize this and plan ahead.). **NEVER IS EMAILED WORK ACCEPTABLE.** If you will have a University related absence on the due date of an assignment, a hard copy form of the homework is due BEFORE the due date, or the assignment needs to be turned in on the appropriate day via a classmate.

Having a cell phone ring in my class is not a problem, but do not take a call while you are in class. This is distracting to those around you and to me. If your phone rings, and you must converse, please go into the hall to do this- otherwise please silence your phones while you are here.

Text messaging has increasingly become a problem. For that reason I feel obligated to include a policy in the syllabus. The policy is this, because I believe this behavior is amazingly rude, text the first time and be shamed. Text a second time and I will ask you to leave the classroom and your absence will be noted in terms of your attendance grade. DO NOT under any circumstances text message in my class. If you cannot give me, and those around you, your undivided attention for 50 minutes on any given day do not come to class.

Last, do not sleep in class. This is not tolerated. If you are too tired to remain awake, exercise your right to be absent.

LEARNING ENHANCEMENT CENTER:

While this is not an English or writing course, I believe that you should be writing at a particular level and that any written work you turn in should be void of basic grammatical errors (run on sentences, sentence fragments, spelling errors, typos, etc.). Based on your writing I may suggest that you see a tutor in the Learning Enhancement Center. If I do make this suggestion, please recognize that it is to help you. For those who are suggested go there, I would like documentation that you have been and that your paper has been edited by a tutor or staff member. You will have exactly 1 week to get the paper back to me. A failure to comply results in a 0 for that assignment. Remember that the center exists for your use and the staff are there to help. The website for the center is: <http://www.smu.edu/alec/home.html>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.) ***Proper documentation is needed by the second week of class to have absences excused. (I need documentation by 1.25.08 and will not be dealing with this at the end of the term.)**

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. ***Proper documentation is needed by the second week of class to have absences excused. (I need documentation by 1.25.08 and will not be dealing with this at the end of the term.)**

ACCOMODATIONS:

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214.768.4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PROFESSIONAL COURTESY:

Students are encouraged to share ideas with classmates and others and to discuss material outside of class; however, all work must be your own. The University's Honor Code governs work (papers, presentations, tests, and quizzes) done for this course. The Honor's Pledge is: "On my honor I have neither given nor received aid on this work." Thus, plagiarism or other forms of cheating are not tolerated. A violation of this code will result in a 0 for academic dishonesty, the potential of being dropped from the course, and the case will be referred to the Honor Council. If you are unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating, see me.

Civility and respect for each other and each other's ideas are critical to an informed discussion of social issues. Be respectful at all times of your classmates and me. Remember that a course in sociology will cover a wide variety of topics that are sensitive in nature. While a given student may not find every topic controversial, a particular idea may indeed be emotionally charged for a variety of reasons for an individual. Therefore everyone will be tolerant of other's opinions and their right to express themselves, provided that the views expressed are not hateful or derogatory in nature. Should a student feel that it is his/her right to put down or malign other's views or their person, then they will immediately be instructed to leave the classroom.

SOC 4399.001: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES
Spring 2008*

DAY/DATE	ACTIVITY	READING/ASSIGNMENT DUE
Wednesday, 1.16.08	Course Introduction- PPT Syllabus Questions/Answers Discussion of Assignments	None
Friday, 1.18.08	Cake Day/Discussion	Blackboard Articles/HW ASSIGNMENT
Monday, 1.21.08	Holiday/NO CLASS	NO CLASS
Tuesday 1.22.08	Class Lecture	Text 1
Wednesday, 1.23.08	Class Lecture	Text 2
Friday, 1.25.08	Class Lecture	Text 3
Monday, 1.28.08	Class Lecture	Text 4
Wednesday, 1.30.08	Class Lecture	Text 5
Friday, 2.01.08	Class Lecture	Text 6
Monday, 2.04.08	Class Lecture	Text 6
Wednesday, 2.06.08	Class Lecture	Text 6/ Arber 1 and 3
Friday, 2.08.08	Discussion	Arber 11 and 12
Monday, 2.11.08	Discussion	Riggs 1-3
Wednesday, 2.13.08	Discussion	Riggs 4-5
Friday, 2.15.08	Discussion	Riggs 6-10
Monday, 2.18.08	Cake Day/Discussion	Field Assignments
Wednesday, 2.20.08	TEST 1	
Friday, 2.22.08	Class Lecture	Text 7
Monday, 2.25.08	Class Lecture	Text 8
Wednesday, 2.27.08	Class Lecture	Text 9
Friday, 2.29.08	Class Lecture	Text 10
Monday, 3.03.08	Class Lecture	Text 11
Wednesday, 3.05.08	Class Lecture	Text 12
Friday, 3.07.08	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
Monday, 3.10.08	Spring Break/NO CLASS**	NO CLASS
Wednesday, 3.12.08	Spring Break/NO CLASS**	NO CLASS
Friday 3.14.08	Spring Break/NO CLASS**	NO CLASS
Monday 3.17.08	Class Lecture	Text 12
Wednesday, 3.19.08	Class Lecture	Text 12/Arber 4 and 7
Friday, 3.21.08	Class Lecture	Arber 8 and 10
Monday, 3.24.08	Discussion	Snowdon Prologue -3
Wednesday, 3.26.08	Discussion	Snowdon 4-7
Friday, 3.28.08	Discussion	Snowdon 8-12/*Research Paper Topics
Monday, 3.31.08	Cake Day/Discussion	Field Assignments
Wednesday, 4.02.08	TEST 2	
Friday, 4.04.08	Class Lecture	Text 13/*Civic Participation Paper due
Monday, 4.07.08	Class Lecture	Text 14
Wednesday, 4.09.08	Class Lecture	Text 15
Friday, 4.11.08	Class Lecture	Text 16
Monday, 4.14.08	Class Lecture	Text 17
Wednesday, 4.16.08	Class Lecture	Text 17
Friday, 4.18.08	Discussion	Arber 2 and 3/*Research Paper Due
Monday, 4.21.08	FILM	
Wednesday, 4.23.08	FILM	
Friday, 4.25.08	FILM	
Monday, 4.28.08	Discussion	Arber 6 and 9
Wednesday, 4.30.08	Cake Day/Discussion	Film Paper due
Thursday, 5.08.08	FINAL EXAM	9-11am

* Please note that I reserve the right to make changes with prior [appropriate] notice to students.

**Students are advised to try to read the Snowdon book over Spring Break

SOCI 4399.001: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING
ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES
Spring 2008

GUIDELINES FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

Every assignment you turn in to me will be typed, with a 12 point font, and standard margins. Your work must be spellchecked and free of grammatical errors. Pages should be numbered and papers need to be stapled. Do not ever use a cover page (and no files or folders or binders). Please write your name on the top of page 1. Papers should also be professional in nature- so you will not use an informal writing style- including slang, or contractions.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION PAPER

Students will be required to do 10 hours of civic participation in an assisted living facility and I have contacted Juliet Fowler Homes for this opportunity. The facility website is here: <http://www.fowlerhomes.org/>

This assignment consists of three parts. Part 1 is to be at the facility for 10 hours. Part 2 is to gather data and turn in field notes. Part 3 is a final report where you document your experiences (what you did, what you observed, what you liked/didn't like, final thoughts/comments) within the framework of your 4 books. (So the overarching question to be answered here might be, What did your experience teach you about the Sociology of Aging?)

The objectives of this assignment are for students to engage in community service and to put one's sociological imagination into practice; for students to gain a practical appreciation for the aging process that is not rooted in your personal experience or text information; to apply classroom learning in the field; for students to engage in data collection; to identify trends and patterns in data collection; for students to engage in data analysis; and to enable students to write an understandable and cohesive research report- making use of raw data.

Guidelines for Part 1:

- 1) No more than 2 hours per week may be completed; and 5 hours must be in Feb and 5 hours must be in March.
- 2) Students will need to document their time in the field and this time will be verified as often as necessary.
- 3) Students will be responsible at all times for respecting the residents/staff, facility rules, and classroom/university policy.
- 4) Students must read and be familiar with: a) HIPAA regulations (<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>); b) the ASA Code of Ethics (<http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf>); c) research articles on note taking, field research, and content analysis. (These are posted in Blackboard)

Evaluation Criteria for Part 1: Students are evaluated based on completion of 10 hours of participation within the 2 month allotted time. Your time in the field will be verified. To achieve a perfect score (100) students must do all 10 hours. This assignment is pass/fail in nature so that if a student does not complete 10 hours, the grade will be a 0. *Note you do not get an 80% for doing 8 hours. You do all 10 for 100 points or earn a 0.

***YOUR 10 HOURS MUST BE COMPLETE BY 3.31.08 OR YOU WILL NOT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THIS PORTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT- WHICH WILL OBVIOUSLY IMPACT YOUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE PARTS 2 AND 3 SUCCESSFULLY.**

Guidelines for Part 2: Students will be taking various types of notes. Refer to "Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them" by Bernard H. Russell regarding the 4 types of notes. You are responsible for writing log, diary, and field notes. Students will also make any relevant methodological notes. Analytical Notes will be important in writing your paper.

*Please note that I will go over the types of field notes in class, however you will be responsible for reading the articles that are posted for you on Blackboard and engaging in some self teaching.

**I will read your notes after the second hour and provide feedback- if you would like. After the second hour in the field, students are on their own.

Evaluation Criteria for Part 2:

- 1) How closely guidelines are followed
- 2) Whether students provide the required types of notes
- 3) How detailed/extensive field notes are

Guidelines for Part 3 [PAPER DUE 4.04.08]:

Your report must have the following sections (labeled as subheadings) and should contain all or some of the information listed in each section. The bulleted list is a suggested content list for each section. Students are encouraged to add or subtract content based on their own experiences in the setting. Under no circumstances are students to utilize a Q&A format for writing the report. The paper must be written like one long essay, with these various sections. The report is worth 100 points, but counts as 20% of your total course grade. Remember that at no time are students to be interviewing persons in the facility. You are only gathering data on your observations. Should natural conversations take place (and they will) avoid firing off a list of preconceived questions at the person(s) you may be spending time with. This paper should be 5-7 pages in length. Be as detailed as you can without being redundant.

Sections (as subheadings in your paper):

- A. Physical Setting. Things to consider: what were the typical days/times of your visits? Did you vary these at all? If so why? If not, why not? Did you go alone? Did you partner with a peer? Were there other students there? Were any staff members there? Did you enjoy the setting? Why or why not? Were you physically comfortable? Why or why not? (Remember the 5 senses here: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste)
- B. Interaction. Things to consider: what types of activities were you generally involved with (group or individual)? What behaviors took place? What observations did you make of residents and employees? What differences (if any) did you observe between residents based on their perceived demographic characteristics (age, race, ability, sex)? With what frequency and what intensity did behaviors occur? Did anything out of the ordinary take place? Did any behaviors surprise you?
- C. Typology of the Participants and/or interactions you've observed. To consider: tell me the types of persons who you had interactions with and make comparisons to course content (readings). Be mindful to note race, class, sex, ability, age, etc. (Here's where you relate your field experience to course materials- how did your time at the facility relate to your readings?)
- D. Summary Statement. Speculate about the essential meaning of the social interaction from the point of view of the residents. How do you think they appreciated your being there? What did you learn from this experience? What questions are you left with? If you could do this assignment over again, what would you do differently? What general comments can you make about the sociology of aging (age grades/experiences/transitions, the meaning of family, the social construction of age, the meaning of health/illness, etc.)

Evaluation Criteria for Part 3:

- 1) How closely instructions are followed.
- 2) How detailed the 4 sections are
- 3) How thorough/critical the connections are made between the experience and course content

AGING PAPER GUIDELINES [DUE IN CLASS 4.18.08]

Students will write a research paper on the aging related topic of your choice. I want your topics on 3.28.08. The paper will take the form of a literature review informing me (the reader) about a particular topic, theory, idea, etc. You will use of 5 scholarly journal articles. Use also your course materials for ideas about a paper. Note that the University of North Texas has a program in Applied Gerontology, so that if you need access to journal articles not housed in our own library, you should have no problem getting sources from that campus. These can easily be obtained via ILL and emailed to you in .pdf format.

This paper should be 5-7 pages long.

FILM PAPER GUIDELINES [DUE IN CLASS 4.30.08]

My goal in showing films that a student might see outside of an academic context is to engage the student in thinking sociologically beyond the text and the classroom. I believe it makes sociology more meaningful when students recognize that it is everywhere and appreciate that learning extends well beyond the academic environment. Last, watching "mainstream" films indicates the presence and strength of secondary agents of socialization.

The paper should be 3-4 pages, double spaced, with 1-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Please DO NOT turn this assignment in with a cover page- and only ensure your name is on the first page somewhere at the top. Pages should be numbered and stapled. Cite from your class materials where appropriate. All writing should be spell checked and free of grammatical errors. I want the paper to have a very particular structure and to be written in 4 parts. Please use the following as your outline:

- ❖ I Summarize the film. (This should be 1 paragraph. Be succinct.)
- ❖ II How was the particular sociological theme or concept (aging and family, social construction of age, etc.) addressed in the film? So that for you, what was the main theme of the film? This will vary for students. (This should be 1 paragraph) [This film was mostly about age related illness, retired folks going back to work, etc....]

- ❖ III What else (from class) was observed, in terms of other concepts or theory? (This should be 1 paragraph and is an extension of the previous. Provide citations from the text- only page numbers are necessary.) [In addition to discussing illness, family relationships with elders were also addressed...]
- ❖ IV Conclude with an evaluation of the film. Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? (This is also 1 paragraph and totally opinion based.)

Students will be graded based on how well the 4 sections were addressed and on how well the paper is written.