

Department of Sociology
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGING IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Fall 2009

Course Information:

Course Number:	SOCI 269	Instructor:	Professor David Warner
Credits:	3 Hours	Office:	Mather Memorial 223C
Lecture Times:	M, W 3:00-4:15 pm	Phone:	216.368.2697
Lecture Room:	Mather Memorial 222	E-mail:	david.warner@case.edu
Prerequisites:	None	Office Hours:	W 10:00-11:15 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The world is confronting two significant trends—the aging of populations and increasing interconnectedness through globalization. Combined, these trends are altering the social, economic, and political dynamics of all nations. This course will consider how these two trends are creating an environment characterized by tensions between competing expectations for economic competitiveness and labor mobility, on the one hand, and increased needs for economic security, health care, and stable family relationships, on the other hand. We will take an international perspective to understanding these tensions by examining core sociological issues of health, economic well-being, living arrangements and family relations for the United States, Canada, the industrialized nations of the European Union, Japan, the People’s Republic of China, and India. At the same time that we explore the similarities and differences *between* nations, we will consider inequalities in the aging experience *within* nations as defined by gender, race, and social class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students successfully completing this course will:

- Understand and describe the demographic and historical factors that have shaped “population aging” in the U.S. and select other countries;
- Identify, describe and critique the major sociological and gerontological theories of aging;
- Outline the five key themes of the life course perspective and apply these features to narratives on individual aging;
- Identify the major social institutions and describe how population aging challenges those institutions, as well as evaluate the extent to which those institutions have adapted to population aging in the U.S. and select other countries;
- Identify and critically analyze the major social policies that affect older adults, and appraise the political context in which these policies arise;
- Understand and describe how social factors—especially, gender, race, and social class—give rise to opportunities and experiences that shape aging experiences in the U.S. and select other countries;.

COURSE FORMAT:

As an introduction to sociology of aging, this course will be based primarily on lecture, discussion, and in-class activities. Be advised that lectures will not be passive learning environments as class participation is encouraged and expected (See *Course Requirements* below). I reserve the right to call on students during class to facilitate participation. **Electronic recording of lectures and other classroom activities is not permitted.**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

There is one required textbook for this course, available for purchase at the Case Western Reserve Bookstore (Thwing Center, 11111 Euclid Ave.):

Matcha Duane A. 2007. *The Sociology of Aging: An International Perspective*. Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-59738-010-2

In addition to the textbook, students are also required to read several scientific articles, which I have made available via the Course Blackboard Site. These supplemental readings are:

Elder, Glen H. Jr., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. 2003. "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: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Hayward, Mark D. and Zhenmei Zhang. 2001. "The Demographic Revolution in Population Aging: A Century of Change, 1950-2050." Pp. 69-85 in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences (5th Ed.)*, edited by R.K. Binstock and L.K. George. New York: Academic Press.

Henretta, John C. 2003. "The Life-Course Perspective on Work and Retirement." Pp. 85-105 in *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, edited by R. A. Settersten, Jr. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc.

Matcha, Duane A. 1997. "Double Jeopardy/ Triple Jeopardy." Pp. 179-193 in *The Sociology of Aging: A Social Problems Perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Moon, Marilyn. 2006. "Organization and Financing of Health Care." Pp. 380-396 in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences (6th Ed.)*, edited by R. H. Binstock and L. K. George. Burlington, MA: Academic Press.

Settersten, Richard A., Jr. 2003. "Invitation to the Life Course: The Promise." Pp. 1-12 in *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, edited by R. A. Settersten, Jr. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students successfully completing this course will carefully integrate the course material and not simply memorize “facts.” This emphasis may be different from other courses with which you are familiar, and is one of the challenges of this course. In this end, I will use the following methods of evaluation to measure careful integration and analysis of the course material.

1) Class Participation and Assigned Readings:

Each class session has a set of readings matched to it. You should complete these readings before the class session for which they are assigned, as they will allow you to follow the lecture or classroom activity more effectively. Students are expected to demonstrate their proficiency with the readings through class participation. I will monitor and record students’ participation in class activities and assess the overall quality of participation at the end of the semester. Students with regular and *relevant* participation will receive the maximum credit. **Attendance without participation is not sufficient for full credit.**

To facilitate your reading preparation for the examinations, you are *strongly* encouraged to complete the **Chapter Review Questions** at the end of each chapter of the Matcha text.

2) Application of Life Course Perspective:

This short written assignment will require you to analyze the life of one of the main characters in a popular film in terms of the life course principles we discuss in class. You may only analyze a film that has been approved for this assignment. Your assignment must be 4-5 typed pages long, double-spaced in a 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides. This assignment is due **Monday, September 21st** by 3pm (the start of class). Detailed instructions, including a list of pre-approved films, will be distributed at least one week before the assignment is due.

3) Mid-Term Examination:

A mid-term examination will be administered in-class on **Monday, October 12th**. The exam will cover material from lecture, readings and class discussion. The exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.

Students who miss the exam due to an unanticipated excused absence (i.e., illness or family emergency) will have the opportunity to take a make-up exam within *one week* of notification of an excused absence or return to class, whichever comes first.

Students who know that they will miss the exam due an excused religious observance or extra-curricular activity will be required to take a make-up examination *before* the exam is administered in-class. Students in this situation should see the instructor at least 2 weeks before the scheduled exam date to register for the make-up exam.

Please note that the make-up examination will be essay format. (See *Attendance* below for the definition of an *excused* absence and other attendance policies).

4) Social Policy Analyses:

As we examine the implication of population aging for social institutions, you will complete three social policy analyses on economic security, health care, and the end of life, respectively. You will be required to examine the relevant policy (or policies) in the United States and make

comparisons between the United States and one other industrialized country discussed in class. Detailed instructions will be distributed at least one week before each assignment is due.

The Social Policy Analyses are due on **Wednesday, November 4th**, **Wednesday, November 18th**, and **Wednesday, November 25th**. Assignments are to be turned in no later than 3pm on the due date. Assignments due on a date when the class will not meet, as indicated in the accompanying *Topic Outline*, should be turned in to the staff in the Sociology Main Office, 226 Mather Memorial. Do not turn in any assignment more than 24 hours before it is due. ***Electronic submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.***

5) **Final Examination:**

The final course examination will be administered during the University defined Final Examination Period. The Final Exam for this course will be held **Tuesday, December 15th from 12:30 to 3:30 pm**. The exam will be cumulative in nature, although special emphasis will be given to materials covered since the mid-term. Students will be required to synthesize the material from the entire course for some portions of the exam. The format of the final exam will be similar to the midterm exam.

No make-up exam will be administered except in the case of a conflict with another *University* scheduled activity. Students are encouraged to make their end of the semester travel plans accordingly.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular class attendance is essential and expected. Given the breadth of materials in this course, it is unrealistic to expect that everything assigned for reading will be covered in class and that everything covered in class will come from the readings. The lectures will introduce factual and explanatory material not covered in the assigned readings, building a comprehensive picture of each area of the sociology of aging. Therefore, regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of this course.

Students who are absent from class are responsible for finding out about the material—including getting notes—from a fellow student. *I do not release my notes to students; please do not ask.* Students who are absent from the midterm examination are responsible for informing me about their excused absence within *one week* following their absence from class (except where prior notification is required, as in 3 and 4 below).

In general, excused absences exist only for illness, death/personal crisis, participation in athletic events or other extra-curricular activities, and religious holidays.

- 1) **Illness:** Students who wish to claim an excused absence due to illness will be required to submit a statement from a health professional briefly describing the illness and the dates ill. University Health Services (UHS) "...will provide written verification of the date of a student's visit, and with student permission will communicate with the appropriate dean's office in the event of hospitalization or prolonged illness" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual* 1999, p. 11).
- 2) **Death or personal crisis:** "In the event of a death in the family or other personal crisis requiring the student's absence from class, the student should notify the Office of Undergraduate Studies, 368-2928, which will provide documentation of such absences to instructors" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual* 1999, p. 12).

- 3) **Athletic events or other extra-curricular activities:** “Students who are involved in athletic or other extra-curricular activities may present written explanations of an event-related absence provided by the coach or sponsor. Such explanations are not automatically excuses for absences from class. Any such events are scheduled well in advance; students should let the instructor know about the absence *ahead of time and make prior arrangements* to make up work” (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor’s Manual* 1999, p. 12, emphasis added).

Thus, students participating in athletic events or other extra-curricular activities must make arrangements to take examinations *early* should a scheduling conflict exist. Students who seek exemption after the fact will **not** be permitted to make up the examination.

- 4) **Religious holidays:** “Any student who is unable to attend classes or participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day because of his or her religious beliefs is excused from any such activity. The student will be given the opportunity to make up the examination or work that was missed, to the extent possible, at the discretion of the instructor” (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor’s Manual* 1999, p. 11).

As the dates of religious observances are known well in advance, religious observances, you must make arrangements to take the examination *early*. If you will miss lecture due to religious observances, you should inform me the class period prior to the absence.

I reserve the right to submit a report “to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for such action as the dean considers appropriate” if I feel “a student is jeopardizing his or her class work by absence...” (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor’s Manual*, p. 11).

GRADING:

Students will earn their final grade in this course based on their level of class participation and their performance on each of the examinations.

Weight of the Course Requirements:

Class Participation	50 points
Application of Life Course Perceptive	50 points
Midterm Exam #2	100 points
Social Policy Analysis (3 @ 40 points each)	150 points
Final Examination	150 points
Total Possible:	<u>500 points</u>

In constructing the grading system for this course, I have considered two things: (1) the highest point total earned and (2) the lowest minimum competence needed to pass. Therefore, the highest grade earned on any given examination will become the maximum score for that exam and grades will be determined as the percentage correct relative to the highest score. For example, if the highest score on the first midterm is 90 points out of 100 then 90 becomes the highest possible score and other scores are evaluated relative to this. In this scenario, if a student had a raw score of 80, her or his grade on the first midterm would be 89% and she or he would earn 89 points toward the final course grade. Final grades will also be determined in this manner with the top-scoring student(s) setting the maximum number of points possible.

This system is not a “curve” because there is no set number of As, number of Bs, etc. It is possible for everyone in this class to earn an A.

Here are the highest point totals I will use to assign exam and final grades in this course:

To earn a(n)	A	students need at least	90%	of highest point total
	B		80%	
	C		70%	
	D		65%	

These percentage cut-offs are absolute. Students must earn the minimum percentage of the highest point total listed for each grade; I will not “round-up” final grades. A student who accumulates 89.9% of the highest point total has earned a B. *No Exceptions.*

**Students that elect the Pass/No Pass grade option must earn at least 70% of the highest point total (a ‘C’) to receive a Pass in the course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

As describe above, the Application of the Life Course Perspective Paper and three Social Policy Analyses are due by 3pm on September 21st, November 4th, November 18th, and November 25th, respectively. **Papers turned in after these times will be docked 10% per (24 hours) day late.** Papers will be considered one-day late if they are submitted after the specified time but on the due date. Late papers must be submitted within one week of the original due date. Papers submitted after these dates will **not** be accepted. Late Papers must be turned in to the staff in the Sociology Main Office (226 Mather Memorial), who will sign and date the submission. I will not accept late Papers left in my mailbox or under my office door.

GRADE PETITIONS:






Occasionally, there may be an error in how an exam or assignment was scored or in the recording of your grade (grades will be regularly posted on the course *Blackboard* site and students are responsible for monitoring the online gradebook). If you believe an error in scoring has been made, you may resubmit the assignment *within one week of its return* with a written memo detailing why you believe an error was made. I will re-grade the assignment (which means your score may increase, stay the same, or decrease) and return it to you. In the event that you are dissatisfied with the response or if you dispute your final grade in the course, you are welcome to petition the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Sociology.

EXTRA CREDIT:

In the interest of fairness to all students, **No Extra Credit** will be awarded in this course; students are advised to put in the amount of preparation necessary to complete successfully the course requirements as outlined in this syllabus.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT:

Learning cannot occur in a classroom environment devoid of respect. Therefore, I place the utmost premium on respectful conduct in the classroom, representing diversity, and acknowledging different experiences and opinions. Respectful classroom conduct means:

- 1) Engaging in classroom behavior that is conducive to the lecture or classroom activity and the educational goals of your fellow classmates. Accordingly, students enrolled in this course will:
 - a. Arrive in class and be prepared to begin the lesson on-time.
 -  b. Turn **off** all cell phones, pagers and other electronic personal communication devices **prior to** modes.
 -  c. Turn **off** all MP3 players, IPODs and other portable audio/video devices **prior to entering the classroom**. Students will also remove the headphones, earpieces, etc. associated with these devices. Electronic recording of classroom activities is not permitted.
 -  d. **Stow-away** laptop computers, Tablet PCs, or other personal computing devices. Students are not permitted to take notes electronically in this course unless it is medically necessary, the student is registered with the Coordinator of Disability Services, and presents written notification of the need to use a laptop computer.
 -  e. Direct their attention to the lesson and participate in all classroom activities. Students will **not** read newspapers, magazines, books or other materials during class, unless directed to do so as part of a class exercise.
 -  f. Refrain from eating during class. Students may consume beverages during class, so long as they are not disruptive.
- 2) Engaging in behavior that respects the opinions of all members of the class. We will cover and discuss controversial issues surrounding the study of aging and the aged. I welcome differing viewpoints and encourage students to share their opinions in a respectful manner that does not personally attack or belittle the opinions of others.

Students who choose to engage in disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and repeated disruptions will be reflected in lower class-participation scores. I reserve the right to define additional behavior as disruptive on a need-be basis.

These policies are designed to comply with the Standards of Conduct outlined in the *Case Western Reserve University General Bulletin*, which reads in part:

“A student enrolling in the University assumes an obligation to behave in a manner compatible with the University’s function as an educational institution. It is clear that in a community of learning, willful disruption of the educational process, destruction of property, dishonesty, and interference with the rights of other members of the University cannot be tolerated. The University retains the power to maintain order within the University and to exclude those who are disruptive to the educational process.” (p.41).

I encourage students to read the Standards of Conduct policy in its entirety. The General Bulletin is available at <http://www.case.edu/bulletin/casegenbulletin04-06.pdf> .

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

“The University's mission rests on the premise of intellectual honesty: in the classroom, the laboratory, the office, and the solitary examination desk. Without a prevailing ethic of honor and integrity not only in scientific pursuits but also in all scholarly activity, the very search for knowledge is impaired....[E]ach of us must therefore accept individual responsibility for our behavior and our work, and refrain from taking credit for the work of others.” (from the *CWRU Statement on Ethics*, <http://studentaffairs.case.edu/office/judicial/policies/ethics.html>).

I strongly encourage students to familiarize themselves with the entirety of the University's Academic Integrity Policy, including what constitutes an academic integrity violation (<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/office/judicial/policies/integrity.html>). It is my policy that any student found committing acts of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade in this course at minimum. There are no exceptions to this policy.

OFFICE HOURS:

I encourage students to come to office hours not simply to address difficulties they may be having in the course, but to discuss a reading you found particularly interesting, ask about further reading on a subject, if they have questions about the material covered in class, or to simply talk about their experiences in this class and at the University. I would like each student to come to office hours at least once this semester. If you cannot make the scheduled office hours listed on page 1, please e-mail me or call my office to set up an appointment. Students with disabilities who are registered with the Coordinator of Disability Services (368-5230) and who may need individual arrangements are especially encouraged to make an appointment. Appointments are available only on days when this course meets. *Please note that I only respond to email between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday–Friday when classes are in session.*

CONFIDENTIALITY:

In compliance with *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* (FERPA), all confidential course materials, including examination scores, will be provided directly to each student and will not be posted, displayed, or otherwise made available in a public forum. Although students may sign a FERPA Waiver consenting to the release of educational records to a parent, it is my policy not to discuss the grades or progress of any student in this course with anyone but that student except as necessary to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Coordinator of Disability Services, the Academic Integrity Board or other agents of Case Western Reserve University as outlined in this syllabus.