2023 Fall

SOCI130209

**Aging and Society**

Professor: Lin Chen, Ph.D.

Lectures: Wednesday 1:30-3:10pm, H5315

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I usually respond within 1-2 business days. Please do not email me through elearning.

You are responsible for the information in this syllabus. Read it carefully and ask questions if necessary.

*Today is the oldest you’ve ever been, and the youngest you’ll ever be again.*

*~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

**Course Description**

This course aims to familiarize students with theories, concepts, and phenomena of population aging, which impacts multiple dimensions of the society and the globe. Aging is a biological phenomenon, but also a social process for both individuals and society at large. We will discuss the economic, healthcare, intergenerational, and environmental, and cultural factors woven in these social processes and phenomena. Topics will include but not limited to aging and life course, demography, dementia, family, caregiving, community support, ageism, productive aging, and social policy. Aging is a life-long process—this course will guide students in developing an understanding of how aging shapes the lives of individuals, families, and society in a broad and holistic sense.

**Course Objectives**

* To describe the nature and characteristics of population aging, noting the culture of aging including attitudes toward older adults
* To understand various perspectives in understanding aging
* To understand how health, intergenerational relationships, families, communities, societies, cultures, and policies construct and reconstruct experiences of aging
* To sensitize students with aging population and understand this population’s unique needs and experiences
* To engage in critical thinking in order to gain a deeper and broader understanding of various aspects of aging—i.e., cultivate your gerontological imagination

**Attendance**

I do take the attendance for each student in each class while not typically using a sign-in sheet. Students are allowed oneunexcused absence. After that, your participation grade will be lowered by 5% for every additional unexcused absence. Students also are graded on their in-class participation, which requires attendance. Thus, attendance is highly recommended.

**Make-up Policy**

In general, late work is not accepted. If you plan on missing a class the day an assignment is due, you must arrange a time to turn in the assignment to the instructor or teaching assistant before class begins on the due date to receive full credit. There are no make-ups for finals or in-class assignments except for medical/familial emergencies; or other accepted excused absences (e.g., religious observances; university-related sports travel); and academic engagements (e.g., conference presentations). In the latter cases, you will need to inform me of the excused absence at least a week in advance to arrange for you to submit any assignments per the policy mentioned above (i.e., before class due date).

**Classroom Conduct**

I expect everyone, including myself, to respect everyone, actively listen to each other during class discussions, and facilitate an environment conducive for inclusion, equity, and learning. To maximize the learning capabilities of all students, please do not hesitate to ask me questions at any time during class to clarify or restate any material we cover. Your participation is always welcomed, and I encourage students to share any relevant information/ideas. I also ask that distracting behavior, such as texting, web surfing, and talking to fellow students about material unrelated to the course, be avoided during class. Cell phones should be kept off or on silent. Laptops may be used for academic purposes only that relate to the course.

Class recordings: Students need prior written permission from the instructor before recording any portion of this class. If permission is granted, the audio and/or video recording is to be used only for the student’s personal instructional use. Such recordings are not intended for a wider public audience, such as postings to the internet or sharing with others.

**Academic Dishonesty**

I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty and misbehavior. Academic misbehavior means any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the education process. Students who commit or assist in committing dishonest acts are subject to downgrading (to a failing grade/zero for the test, paper, or other course-related activity in question, or for the entire course). Academic dishonesty and misbehavior are not limited to, but includes:

* Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use, or intentionally providing or attempting to provide, unauthorized materials, information or assistance in any academic exercise. Examples include: (a) copying from another student’s test paper; (b) allowing another student to copy from a test paper; (c) using unauthorized material such as a "cheat sheet" during an exam.
* Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification of any information or citation. Examples include: (a) citation of information not taken from the source indicated; (b) listing sources in a bibliography not used in a research paper.
* Plagiarism: To take and use another’s words or ideas as one’s own. Examples include: (a) failure to use appropriate referencing when using the words or ideas of other persons; (b) altering the language, paraphrasing, omitting, rearranging, or forming new combinations of words in an attempt to make the thoughts of another appear as your own.
* Unauthorized reuse of work product: submission for academic credit, without the prior permission of the instructor, of substantial work previously submitted for credit in another course. Example: submitting a paper in a current course that was written for, and submitted in, a previous course.
* Other forms of academic misbehavior include, but are not limited to: (a) unauthorized use of resources, or any attempt to limit another student’s access to educational resources, or any attempt to alter equipment so as to lead to an incorrect answer for subsequent users; (b) enlisting the assistance of a substitute in the taking of examinations; (c) violating course rules as defined in the course syllabus or other written information provided to the student; (d) selling, buying or stealing all or part of an un-administered test or answers to the test; (e) changing or altering a grade on a test or other academic grade records.

**Required Readings and Workload**

Although there will be no required textbooks, students are required to read all articles each week before class. Readings will include theoretical, empirical, and policy-oriented research. All required readings will be available in PDF format via the course website (@<http://elearning.fudan.edu.cn>). I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule if needed. Any changes will be announced in class, via the course email list, and posted on the course website as well as class WeChat group. Keeping up with the assigned reading will be crucial to your grade.

You should expect to read approximately 50 pages per week on average; some weeks will be lighter, and some heavier. However, this does not include the reading you will need to undertake for your final paper.

**Grades**

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

* Class participation 10%
* Life review interview 20%
* Policy critique and recommendation 30% (including presentation 5%)
* Final paper 40%

1. Class Participation

Class participation is assessed by your contributions to in-class discussions revolving around the course readings and related material. There is a reading list for each time we meet. You are expected to read the articles prior class and be prepared to discuss them. Class discussions are not only vital to your grade, but also to the success of the class. Discussion topics for some classes are provided (see below in schedules). The instructor also offers opportunities of discussion during classes. In addition to readings, students are encouraged to share any news and/or observations during the week regarding older adults and population aging in the beginning of each class. Please make well-thought and appropriate comments related to the course material; quality is better than quantity.

Participation takes many forms, including building on statements and posing questions that challenge or support the views presented by others; all are welcome, as long as students remain respectful of one another. One consistent participation prerequisite, however, is attendance. Excessive absences, tardiness, and leaving early will jeopardize students’ participation grade.

Here are some ways to enhance class discussion:

* Supporting and encouraging group discussion
* Backing up experiences, feelings, and "hunches" with theoretical and/or empirical references.
* Acknowledging various viewpoints
* Utilizing practical experience to explain theoretical data
* Building on others’ contributions with theoretical and/or empirical data
* Critiquing arguments or analyses presented by authors, classmates, or the instructor
* Posing questions to challenge or clarify a statement

2. Life Review Interview

Each student will interview an older adult (65 years old and over) and submit a report. This assignment is divided into three parts: (a) identifying one participant and getting informed consent; (b) interviewing participants; and (c) a written report (6-8 pages). The interview is expected to trace the older adult’s life with her/him, including their life milestones (e.g., marriage, child birth, employment, retirement, intergenerational relationship, etc.), their attitudes toward aging process, and how they perceive their aging process. The assignment does not require students to transcribe the interview verbatim. Instead, students need to make arguments with the support from the interview contents (e.g., quotations). At the end of the report, students should reflect on what they learned from the interviewed incorporating with class readings.

Due: 11:00am October 18, 2023

Submission: Word file via elearning, hardcopy in-class

3. Policy/Practice Critique and Recommendation

In a group project format (e.g., 3-4 students per group), this assignment requires students to identify an area of policy/practice in relation to aging in China or their own countries. The selection of policy/practice can be a shared interest among group members. Each group can propose a potential interested area in class and discuss with the instructor in Week 10 and Week 11. This assignment is divided into four parts: (a) identifying the targeted policy/practice; (b) critically appraising its current format and implications, and reasoning suggestions on its future development; (c) a written report (8-10 pages); and (d) presenting your findings and recommendations in class. Based on extensive literature search, the group decide on one area of the policy and analyze its current format, targeted aging population, service deliveries, and relevant evaluations. Each group is expected to write a report on the analysis and recommendation on feasible development on these policies within the local contexts. At the end of the report, a description of workload of each group member should be provided.

Due: 11:00am November 29, 2023

Submission: Word file via elearning, hardcopy in-class

4. Final Paper

Students are expected to identify a topic of interest related to aging and write a research paper reviewing the academic literature on this topic. Successful papers will be structured around a social phenomenon/issue or your own observation, providing a foundation of raising one research question or one concern of the phenomenon/issue/observation (examples will be discussed in class). Students will go through literature search and cite at least 7-10 articles (not in the reading list) from peer-reviewed scientific journals. These articles will serve as the evidence to answer the research question or address the concern (ideally: a carefully considered answer to the research question you posed and a summary of the key arguments and data points that support the thesis). Students will follow to offer policy and/or practice solutions based on coherent analysis and discussion.

Due: 11:00am December 27, 2023

Submission: Word file via elearning, hardcopy to the mailbox on the 10th floor in Wenke Building

Assignment Format: Two written reports and final paper must be in left alignment, double spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font. Reference format must use APA style.

**Extra Resources**

Relevant journals: *Aging and Mental Health*, *Ageing & Society*, *The Gerontologists*, *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, *Journal of Aging and Health*, *Journal of Aging Studies*, *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, *Journals of Gerontology, Series B Social Sciences*, *International Journal of Human Aging and Development*, *Research on Aging*

Movies: The Father (2020), What They Had (2018), Still Alice (2014), Nebraska (2013), Amour (2012), Arrugas (2011), Beginners (2010), The Bucket List (2007)

**Course Overview and Organization**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Notes** |
| *Part 1 Understanding Being Old and Population Aging* | | | |
| 1 | Sep. 6 | Introductions |  |
| 2 | Sep. 13 | Individual Aging and Population Aging | Discussion |
| 3 | Sep. 20 | Physiological Aging |  |
| 4 | Sep. 27 | Theoretical Understandings of Aging |  |
| 5 | Oct. 4 | **No Class** | National holidays |
| 6 | Oct.11 | **No Class** | For life review interview  **Report due 10/18** |
| *Part 2: Older Adults in Family and Community* | | | |
| 7 | Oct. 18 | Dementia Series (1) – Cognitive Aging |  |
| 8 | Oct. 25 | Dementia Series (2) – Dementia and Nursing Home Care |  |
| 9 | Nov. 1 | Older Adults and Their Families | Discussion |
| 10 | Nov. 8 | Older Adults and Their Community (1) |  |
| 11 | Nov. 15 | Older Adults and Their Community (2) |  |
| *Part 3: Aging and Society* | | | |
| 12 | Nov. 22 | **No Class** | For policy/practice critique  **Report due 11/29** |
| 13 | Nov 29 | Policy/Practice Presentation |  |
| 14 | Dec.6 | Ageism |  |
| 15 | Dec. 13 | Financial Exploitation |  |
| 16 | Dec.20 | Social Policy | Discussion |
| **Term paper due at 11:00am December 27, 2023** | | | |

**Classes and Readings**

*Part 1 Understanding Being Old and Population Aging*

Week 1 (September 6) Introductions

* Course overview
* Life span and life expectancy
* The longevity revolution and you

Week 2 (September 13) Individual Aging and Population Aging

*Discussion: Is the aging of our population good or bad for society?*

* The gray tsunami
* Domestic and international demographic shift
* The epidemiologic transition

Reading:

Even-Zohar, A. & Werner, S. (2020). The effect of educational intervations on willingness to work with older adults: A comparison of students of social work and health professions. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 63*, 114-132.

Scott, A. (2018). The myth of the “aging society.” Project Syndicate, 2018 May 25.

Week 3 (September 20) Physiological Aging

* Cardiovascular system
* Immune system
* Life style effects

Reading:

Amarya, S., Singh, K., & Sabharwal, M. (2015). Changes during aging and their association with malnutrition. *Journal of Clinical Gerontology and Geriatrics, 6*(3), 78-84.

Feng, Q., Zhen, Z., Gu, D., Wu, B., Duncan, P. W., & Purser, J. L. (2013). Trends in ADL and IADL disability in community-dwelling older adults in Shanghai, China, 1998-2008. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B*, 68(3), 476-485.

Week 4 (September 27) Theoretical Understandings of Aging

* Individual perspective
* Social perspective
* Cultural perspective

Reading:

McMullin, J. A. (2000). Diversity and the state of sociological aging theory. *The Gerontologist*, *40*(5), 517-530.

Rowe, J. W., & Kahn, R. L. (2015). Successful aging 2.0: Conceptual expansions for the 21st century. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B*, *70*(4), 593-596.

Week 5 (October 4) NO CLASS: National holidays

Week 6 (October 11) NO CLASS: For life review interview

*Part 2: Older adults in family and community*

Week 7 (October 18) Dementia Series (1) – Cognitive Aging

\*\*\*Life review interview due

* Cognitive aging
* Mild cognitive impairment

Reading:

Finlay, J., Esposito, M., Langa, K. M., Judd, S., & Clarke, P. (2022). Cognability: An Ecological Theory of neighborhoods and cognitive aging. *Social Science & Medicine*, 309, 115220.

Williams, V., Webb, J., Read, S., James, R., & Davis, H. (2020). Future lived experience: inclusive research with people living with dementia. *Qualitative Research, 20*(5), 721-740.

Week 8 (October 25) Dementia Series (2) – Dementia and Nursing Home Care

We will watch parts of movie “Still Alice” to identify dementia symptoms and related family caregiving.

* Symptoms
* Prognoses
* Impacts

Reading:

Kaiser, R. M. & Kaiser, S. L. (2017). The insiders as outsiders: Professionals caring for an aging parent. *The Gerontologist*, 57(1), 46-60.

Feng, Z., Glinskaya, E., Chen, H., Gong, S., Qiu, Y., Xu, J., & Yip, W. (2020). Long-term care system for older adults in China: Policy landscape, challenges, and future prospects. *The Lancet, 396*(10259), 1362-1372.

Week 9 (November 1) Older Adults and Their Families

*Discussion: Should families* be *primarily responsible for eldercare?*

* Intergenerational relationships
* Grandparenting

Reading:

Choi, S. W. E., & Zhang, Z. (2021). Caring as curing: Grandparenting and depressive symptoms in China. *Social Science & Medicine*, 289, 114452.

Martindale-Adams, J., Nichols, L. O., Zuber, J., Burns, R., & Graney, M. J. (2015). Dementia caregivers’ use of services for themselves. *The Gerontologist, 56*(6), 1053-1061.

Week 10 (November 8) Older Adults and Their Community (1)

* Aging-in-place
* Community-based services
* Age-friendly communities

Reading:

Choi, Y. J. (2022). Understanding aging in place: Home and community features, perceived age-friendliness of community, and intention toward aging in place. *The Gerontologist, 62*, 46-55.

Greenfield, E. A., Black, K., Buffel, T., & Yeh, J. (2019). Community gerontology: A framework for research, policy, and practice on communities and aging. *The Gerontologist, 59*(5), 803-810.

Week 11 (November 15) Older Adults and Their Community (2)

* Productive aging
* Volunteering

Reading:

Gonzales, E., Matz-Costa, C., & Morrow-Howell, N. (2015). Increasing opportunities for the productive engagement of older adults: A response to population aging. *The Gerontologist*, *55*, 252-261.

Li, Y., Xu, L., Chi, I., & Guo, P. (2013). Participation in productive activities and health outcomes among older adults in urban China. *The Gerontologist, 54*, 784-796.

Week 12 (November 22) NO CLASS: For policy/practice critique

Week 13 (November 29) Policy/Practice Presentation

\*\*\*Policy/practice report due

*Part 3: Aging and Society*

Week 14 (December 6) Ageism

* Attitudes about aging
* Social response to ageism

Reading:

Achenbaum, W. A. (2015). A history of ageism since 1969. *Generations, 39*(3), 10-16.

Fraser, S., Lagacé, M., Bongué, B., Ndeye, N., Guyot, J., Bechard, L., ... & Tougas, F. (2020). Ageism and COVID-19: What does our society’s response say about us?. *Age and Ageing, 49*(5), 692-695.

Gendron, T. L., Welleford, E. A., Inker, J., & White, J. T. (2016). The language of ageism: Why we need to use words carefully. *The Gerontologist*, *56*(6), 997-1006.

Week 15 (December 13) Financial Exploitation

We will watch parts of movie “I care a lot” to identify fraud and financial exploitation targeting on older adults.

* Fraud
* Financial exploitation

Reading:

Lichtenberg, P. A., Campbell, R., Hall, L., & Gross, E. Z. (2020). Context matters: Financial, psychological, and relationship insecurity around personal finance is associated with financial exploitation. *The Gerontologist, 60*(6), 1040-1049.

Mears, D. P., Reisig, M. D., Scaggs, S., & Holtfreter, K. (2016). Efforts to reduce consumer fraud victimization among the elderly: The effect of information access on program awareness and contact. *Crime & Delinquency*, *62*(9), 1235-1259.

Rabiner, D. J., O'Keeffe, J., & Brown, D. (2005). A conceptual framework of financial exploitation of older persons. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, 16*(2), 53-73.

Week 16 (December 20) Social Policy

*Discussion: Should we invest more resources in younger or older people?*

* Policies on aging
* Future care plan

Reading:

Li, X., & Zhang, W. (2013). The impacts of health insurance on health care utilization among the older people in China. *Social Science & Medicine*, 85, 59-65.

\*\*\* Term paper due at 11:00am December 27, 2023