

Sociology 3750 [A2]  
**THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGING**

Fall Semester, 2008  
Grande Prairie Regional College  
Tuesday & Thursday: 16:00 – 17:20 hrs.

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This course introduces the student to the concept and theory of individual and population aging and ‘gray societies’ from a sociological, human agency perspective. We will examine the interplay between social and other contexts, social institutions and the social supports that impact the older person. Aging will be considered as a lifelong process that is socially constructed. Topics covered will include: demographic trends and implications; social values, norms and attitudes; contemporary research and policy issues such as work, retirement, leisure and housing; attitudes towards death; and models of positive, successful, and active aging that respect and encourage the social contribution of older persons.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Mid-Term Exam (30 points).....	October 16
Final Exam (30 points).....	TBA
<b>Semester Work</b> [total 120 points] –	
Daily Individual Chapter/Section Preps (30 points).....	<i>begins</i> September 11
Daily Individual Media Analysis (30 points).....	<i>begins</i> September 16
Proposal & Annotated Bibliography (30 points).....	<i>due</i> October 2
Presentation & Class Handout (30 points).....	<i>due</i> November 13

**Total points are 180;** your total points will be converted to a percent (%) grade to determine your letter grade, for example, 140/180 = 78% = B+

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

[other materials will be distributed on an as-needed basis]

Barry D. McPherson and Andrew Wister, 2008 (5<sup>th</sup> ed.), Aging as a Social Process: Canadian Perspectives. Oxford University Press: Don Mills.

Gail Sheehy, 1995, New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time. Ballantine Books: New York.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**  
**[excellent reading but check for availability]**

Neena Chappell, Lynn McDonald and Michael Stones, 2008 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Aging in Contemporary Canada. Pearson/Prentice-Hall: Toronto.

Ellen Gee and Gloria Gutman (eds.), 2000, The Overselling of Population Aging: Apocalyptic Demography, Intergenerational Challenges, and Social Policy. Oxford University Press: Don Mills.

Christopher Gilleard and Paul Higgs, 2000, Cultures of Aging: Self, Citizen and the Body. Prentice Hall: Harlow (UK).

Herbert Northcott, 2005 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), Aging in Alberta. Detselig: Calgary.

*You are of course encouraged to read beyond the assigned course book(s). Check out popular magazines, academic books and journals and other sources for coverage of topics discussed in this course: such materials are available in the GPRC library, on the world wide web, through inter-library loans, and elsewhere.*

**SEMESTER EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Exams *may* consist of a combination of multiple choice questions, true/false + justified, glossary terms/concepts to define, short answer questions or long essay questions -- based on all lecture and text materials. Exams, or parts thereof, may even be take-home!

**PLEASE NOTE:**

☛ A missed exam unfortunately will not be accommodated - *unless* the situation is an unexpected personal or family emergency. **No make-up exams unless it's an emergency.**

⇒ What the course assignment(s) entails (120 points of course total) will be discussed in detail as classes get underway and as the course progresses. *You will be provided with instructions and relevant information with plenty of lead time.*

♥ For the course assignment(s), in case of high enrolments, students will work in teams of 2, and both students will share the mark for their work – otherwise students will work individually.

The **PROPOSAL** and **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** should be a clear statement (2 pages) of a topic of your own choice [*suggested topics will be discussed in class*] and its related issue(s), drawing from your text. The bibliography will consist of up to 15 [minimum 10] *current* books and/or peer-reviewed journal articles that you intend to use to research your chosen topic. Many references can be obtained by searching the Web (with the usual *caveats*) and/or using full-text library subscription services.

You may follow *any* standard style format for essays, papers and articles -- in regards to layout, punctuation, referencing and source citations, footnotes, use of headings, etc.

The **PRESENTATION** and **CLASS HANDOUT** involves a 30-40 minute formal class presentation based on your chosen issue or topic. You will also be required to prepare a 1-2 page sheet summarizing your presented topic, to be distributed to your classmates. The sheet should include relevant facts, statistics (if applicable), and several 'recommended' readings.

***Please note that plagiarism detection software may be used in this course, and students may be required, individually or collectively, to submit key assignments/components in electronic form.***

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your work is at a level appropriate to your year in college/university studies. Always spell- and grammar-check your work; always keep a hard copy or disk copy of your work as back-up. There is writing help on campus, and if in doubt you are always welcome to ask me, your instructor, for clarification. Poor spelling, grammar and organization always interferes with the clear communication of ideas and you *will* lose marks if your over-all communication is ineffective.

Attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged; the same applies to your participation in class discussions. ***Be an active participant in your education!***

**Late assignments (or any applicable assignment/course components) will result in an automatic loss of 5 marks (of the value of the work) PER DAY, up to and including the day of a late submission, unless immediate or prior arrangements, based on exceptional circumstances, have been made. Documented personal or family emergencies, of course, will be accommodated.**

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## **WEEKLY TEXT/LECTURE SCHEDULE**

***Please Note:*** Lectures may not always follow the book sequence, that is, the chapters in our textbook *may* sometimes be followed in a different order. *Refer to the table of contents in the text for detailed chapter content.* The chapters and weeks will overlap in some cases, giving you the chance to get 'caught up' or to read ahead, as the case may be. In addition, please note that lecture content will necessarily include material that does not

appear in the textbook – so this is a ‘heads up’ on why it’s important to attend class on a regular basis! As well, please check BLACKBOARD frequently for updates, links, and announcements.

September 4 -- Introduction to the course; course requirements, etc.; begin Chapter 1 in McPherson & Wister. Please begin reading Sheehy, *New Passages*, esp. chapter 1 (other chapters will be assigned in time)

September 9, 11 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 1

September 16, 18 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 1, 2 **Media analysis begins September 16**

September 23, 25 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 2, 3

September 30, October 2 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 3, 4 **Proposals and Biblios due October 2nd**

October 7, 9 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 4, 5

October 14, 16 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 5, 6 **Mid-Term on the 16<sup>th</sup>**

October 21, 23 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 6, 7

October 28, 30 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 7, 8

November 4, 6 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 8, 9

November (11), 13 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 9 **No classes Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>; Presentations begin Nov. 13th**

November 18, 20 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 10, 11

November 25, 27 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 11, 12

December 2, 4 -- Cont’d; McPherson & Wister, Chapter 12 **Wrap-up and preparations for the final exam (TBA)**

[classes end December 8 2008]

## GRADING SYSTEM

Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage Range	Description
A+	4.0	95 - 100	<i>Outstanding</i>
A	4.0	85 - 94	<i>Excellent</i>
A-	3.7	80 - 84	
B+	3.3	76 - 79	
B	3.0	73 - 75	<i>Good</i>
B-	2.7	70 - 72	
C+	2.3	67 - 69	
C	2.0	64 - 66	<i>Satisfactory</i>
C-	1.7	60 - 63	
D+	1.3	55 - 59	
D	1.0	50 - 54	<i>Minimal Pass</i>
F	0.0	0 - 49	<i>Fail</i>

### ***Six Ways To Make This Course More Valuable:***

- 1. Participate, to engage your learning**
- 2. Question, to enhance your learning**
- 3. Read, to expand your learning**
- 4. Reflect, to measure your learning**
- 5. Apply, to transfer your learning**
- 6. Innovate, to adapt your learning**