

**Sociology 3X03E Sociology of Aging**  
**McMaster University**  
**September 2019-December 2019**

**Lecture**  
**Tuesday 7:00pm – 10:00pm**  
**Location: TSH B106**

**Course Instructor: Dr. Lina Samuel**

**Email: [lsamuel@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lsamuel@mcmaster.ca)**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 5pm-6pm**  
**(Please make an appointment by email)**  
**Office: KTH 632**

**Teaching Assistant: NA**

**Course Description:**

The sociology of aging is particularly relevant as we enter into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The contemporary Canadian population has more older people than ever before. “In 2014, over 6 million Canadians were aged 65 or older, representing 15.6 percent of Canada's population. By 2030—in less than two decades—seniors will number over 9.5 million and make up 23 percent of Canadians. Additionally, by 2036, the average life expectancy at birth for women will rise to 86.2 years from the current 84.2 and to 82.9 years from the current 80 for men” (ESDC Government of Canada, 2014). The sociological perspective (as per C. W. Mills, 1959), attempts to understand aging as a larger public, collective social issue rather than a private, personal matter. This course begins with a discussion of basic concepts, demographic trends, theories and methodologies used in the study of aging. While the course is primarily Canadian focused, we do extend the examination to include a large global perspective. One of the central themes in the course is that aging is not just a biological process, but a complex social process (Wister, 2019: ix). As such, social institutions, policies, cultural practices play an important role in how aging is perceived and how it is experienced at both the individual and collective level.

**Course Objectives:**

Through this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of the social construction of aging and age-related issues.
- Become familiar with contemporary research in the sociology of aging.
- Learn to apply sociological theories to issues around aging.
- Learn to critically analyze the social forces which shape the social construction of aging.
- Critically analyze the role of institutions, policies and practices in the aging process and how individuals *experience* aging as a social process.

**Course Format:** 2 hour lecture, once per week (Tuesday) Plus selected tutorials 50 mins.

## **Course Texts**

Wister, Andrew V. (2019). *Aging as a Social Process 7<sup>th</sup> edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

It is strongly advised that you keep up with the readings and ask questions in class *after* lecture. I always reserve time after lecture for questions. For the tests you will be responsible for both the required readings as well as lecture material.

### **Evaluation:**

Evaluation is based on one written assignment, two film reviews and three in class tests and tutorial attendance.

Test 1: 20%

Test 2: 20%

Test 3: 20%

Writing Assignment 1: 25% Due Tuesday October 29th

Film Review: 5%

Tutorial/Lecture Attendance: 10%

**Please keep back-up copies of all your written work on separate file/ memory key.**

## **Procedures and Rules**

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

## 1a. Missed tests

**Students who miss a term test will be assigned a mark of zero for that test unless their absence is supported by university approved documentation.**

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to **3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work.** Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of **1 Academic Work Missed request per term.** It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, **exceed 1 request per term,** or are absent for a reason other than medical, you **MUST** visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

If your Request is **APPROVED** and a make-up test is required, you will write the make-up test on the **designated date selected by the instructor.** No student is automatically entitled to a second make up test. It is your responsibility to write the tests on the day in which they are scheduled.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will

provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

### **1b.Late assignments**

- You are expected to complete assignments on time.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class lecture on the due date. Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of **5%** per day. The Penalty period does include weekends and holidays. **Please make every effort to hand assignments in on the due date.**

Please come see the instructor if you are experiencing any difficulty with the assignment or the material presented in class. Only hard copies will be graded.

Please note that only McMaster emails will be considered official. Emails from other addresses may disappear into the black hole of spam filters.

- You are expected to keep a back-up, hard copy of your assignment in case it is lost.
- **Accommodation provision:**  
Medical Certificate must state that you were ill on the due date of the assignment for a one day extension. For a longer extension you must prove that you were sick during a longer period or prove an exceptional, unforeseen circumstance.

**2. Grade appeals.** The instructor and teaching assistant(s) take(s) the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the instructor of the error
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
  2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.

If you wish to appeal your assignment grade:

- A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.
- B. Attach to your written explanation your original assignment, including all of the original comments. Submit a hardcopy of the package to the instructor during office hours or after the lecture.
- C. You will receive a response via email or in person about your re-grade.

**3. Electronic communication and electronic learning technology:** Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- Assignments will not be accepted via email. You must submit hard copies of your assignments
- All emails must include the course code (Soc. 3X03) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 24 hours of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication.
- All general questions about the course that are NOT addressed on the syllabus and course website should be asked in class. If you cannot figure something out, chances are your inquiry will be useful for the entire class.

**Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

#### **4. Classroom etiquette**

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Laptops are allowed in class and should be used for taking notes. Other uses, emailing, web surfing will result in the student's being required to turn off the laptop and it may affect your final grade.

**Coming to lectures late, leaving early, not attending tutorials will impact your final grade.**

**Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.**

**Course Schedule**  
**(Subject to minor adjustments)**

Tuesday September 3

Lecture 1. Introduction to the course. Course Assessments and Evaluations  
Discussing Writing Assignment 1

Tuesday September 10

Lecture 2  
Chapter 1 Aging as a Social Process

Tuesday September 17

Lecture 3  
Chapter 2 Historical and Cultural Aspects of Aging

Tuesday September 24

Lecture 4  
Chapter 3 Integrating Physical, Psychological and Social Change Across the Life Course

Tuesday October 1

Lecture 5  
Chapter 4 Population Aging: A Demographic and Geographic Perspective  
Film: *No Sex Please we are Japanese* (BBC) (*Film Review due the following week*  
*2pages double spaced*)

**Tuesday October 8**

**Test 1 (Based on chapters 1, 2, 3, 4)**

**In class: Multiple Choice**

Tuesday October 15 FALL BREAK

Tuesday October 22

Lecture 6  
Chapter 5 Theories and Research in Explaining and Understanding Aging Phenomena

Tuesday October 29

**Writing Assignment DUE at the beginning of class.**

Lecture 7  
Chapter 6 Social Structures, Social Inequality and the Life Course  
Chapter 7 Health Status and Health Care Transitions in an Aging Context

Tuesday November 5

**Test 2 (based on Chapters 5, 6, 7)**

**In Class: Multiple Choice**

Tuesday November 12

Lecture 8

Chapter 8 The Social, Environmental and Health Contexts of Aging (only pages 262-274 which focuses on Living Arrangements in Later Life)

Chapter 9 Family Ties, Relationships and Transitions

*Film: Gen Silent (Film review due the following week 2 pages double spaced)*

Tuesday November 19

Lecture 9

Chapter 10 Later Life Work, Retirement, and Economic Security.

Chapter 11 Social Participation, Social Connectedness, and Leisure among Older Persons

**Tuesday November 26**

**Test 3 (based on Chapter 8 (pages 262-274), 9, 10, 11)**

**In Class: Multiple Choice**

Tuesday December 4

Passing back essays. Reflecting on course. Concluding comments.

If there are any issues with grading please come see me ASAP.

*Have a restful winter holiday and best wishes for your final exams!*