



**Sociology 444 – Sociology of Aging**

**Instructor: Prof. Anne Martin-Matthews**

**Winter Term – January – April 2014**

**Course Schedule: Classes Tues and Thurs 2:00- 3:20 pm**

**Location: FNH 40**

**Course Description (UBC Calendar):** Demographic, economic, and social trends associated with aging, ageism, and aging populations in North America.

**Content Description:** This iteration of Sociology 444 provides an introduction to the sociology of aging, framed within the broader context of social gerontology. Aging is examined at both individual and population levels. Through lectures, discussions, and student-led in-class debates, the course examines the social construction of aging and old age. Representations of apocalyptic demography, social and family life, work and retirement, and access to health and social services in media, popular culture, and social policy are examined. Throughout the course, the diversity and variability of aging and later life are emphasized, with particular focus on gender and ethno-cultural diversity.

**Course Goals:** 1) to provide an introduction to the sociology of aging and social gerontology; 2) to examine the complexity and diversity of later life, challenging the homogenization characteristic of popular discourse; and 3) to provide opportunities to debate controversial issues in aging, with particular emphasis on policies that impact health and social care, and work and social engagement in later life.

**Prerequisites and/or Course Restrictions:** One of SOCI 100, SOCI 200

**Instructor: Prof. Anne Martin-Matthews**

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**Office hours:** By appointment

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## Required Reading:

Chappell, N., McDonald, L., & Stones, M. (2008). *Aging in Contemporary Canada*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Toronto: Pearson Education Canada.

\*\* There will be several articles or excerpts of books that will be supplemental readings for the course. These will be placed on reserve through the UBC library.

**Format of course:** This course includes lectures with class discussion and student presentation and discussion of materials. This approach is designed to enable learning both from the instructor and from one another, through the exchange of ideas through discussion and debate. The goal is to learn new information, critically examine the assumptions and implications of that information, and then to learn to apply that information in various contexts. Therefore, scheduled class time includes interactive components. A lot of course material must be covered in a short time frame, and therefore the success of these activities depends very much on student engagement and participation. Classroom discussion is an important part of this course and all students will be expected to contribute to informed discussion and debate. Regular attendance and knowledge of assigned reading materials is essential for an optimal learning experience.

## Course Assignments, Due dates and Grading:

### Mid-term exams:

#1: Thursday, February 6 :	10%
#2: Thursday, March 13:	10%

<b>Debate Presentation:</b> (Scheduled by topic, see below)	20%
<b>Participation:</b> (including debate peer-review):	10%
<b>Term paper:</b> (due March 27 or April 8, see below)	30%
<b>Final Exam:</b> Open-book, due date in official exam period)	20%

## Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

Schedule	Topic	Required Readings
January 7, 9	Introduction to Individual & Population Aging (Led by D. Panagiotoglu; AMM video presentation)	Ch. 1
January 14, 16	Cultural Representations of Aging: Media, popular culture and the rise of 'anti-aging'	Ch. 2
January 21, 23	Conceptual and Methodological Approaches	Ch. 3 and 4
January 28, 30	Diversity and Complexity: Gender and Ethnicity	Ch. 5 and 6
February 4, 6	Understandings of Aging Bodies  <b>Mid-term exam #1: February 6 ( Ch. 1 -6)</b>	Ch. 7: pp. 167-190 only. (Plus supplemental reading to be assigned)
February 11, 13	Social-Psychological Responses to Aging	Ch. 8: pp. 191-193; Figure 8.1 on p.196; 197-199; 206-211; 214-217.
<b>February 18, 20</b>	<b>Reading Week – No Classes</b>	
February 25, 27	Health and Successful Aging	Ch. 9 and 10
March 4, 6	Kinship and Family Relations	Ch. 11
March 11, 13	Caregiving and care work  <b>Mid-term exam #2: March 13 ( Ch. 7 - 12)</b>	Ch. 12
March 18, 20	Work, Retirement and Economic Security	Ch. 13; Ch 14
March 25, 27	Health Care and Health Policy Issues  March 25: Guest Lecture: To be confirmed	Ch. 15
April 1, 3	End of Life Issues	Ch. 16
April 8	Final Class	Final Exam Question distributed

**Presentation/Debate Topics Dates:** A sign-up sheet will be provided in class at end of week 2 and students will sign up on a first come basis. A maximum of four students per topic, with presentations by each in a five-minute 'debate' style. Guidelines and peer-evaluation instructions will be distributed and discussed in class. Draft outline of debate topics must be submitted to Instructor for review one week prior to the debate, for feedback and comment.

Schedule of topics:

- 1) Aging & Societal Myths/Perceptions – Thursday, January 30
- 2) Gender issues in Aging – Tuesday, February 11;
- 3) Ethno-cultural Diversity in Aging - Thursday, February 13
- 4) Mental Health in Aging – Thursday, February 27
- 5) Aging Bodies& Aging Selves –Thursday, March 6
- 6) Aging and Family Relationships – Tuesday, March 11
- 7) Social Networks/Caregiving – Tuesday, March 18
- 8) Health Care – Thursday, March 27
- 9) End of Life Issues –Tuesday, April 1

In the past, debate 'statements' have included the following: *Population aging is a catastrophe for many societies; Canada provides adequate resources to help those 'aging in a foreign land'; The 'rising tide' of dementia is the most serious challenge facing Canada's aging population; Anti-aging products and advertising are forms of ageism; The care of family members is a 'private trouble' to be worked out by the individual, not a 'public issue' of concern to employers and/ or government.* These are the kinds of issues that will be debated in the class.

**Term Paper Assignment:** DUE: **March 27<sup>th</sup> for debate topics 1 – 7; due April 8th for debate topics 8-9.**

This assignment is linked to your debate presentation. Your term paper must be 8-10 pages in length (excluding title page and reference section), typed (12 point font), and double spaced. Papers exceeding this length will not be graded. Paper topics will relate to, and expand upon, the issues addressed in the five minute in-

class debate presentation. Only journal articles or book chapters may be used. Text readings may be referenced but cannot be a primary source of information.

Final Exam: A final essay-style exam will be given out in the last week of class, and will be due on the date of the final exam, as assigned during the UBC exam period.

### **Additional Information:**

**Academic Dishonesty**: Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit [www.arts.ubc.ca](http://www.arts.ubc.ca) and go to the Students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

You should **retain a copy of all submitted assignments** (in case of loss) and should also retain all marked assignments. Students have a right to view marked examinations with the instructor, providing you apply to do so within a month of receiving final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the University.

**Late assignments**: Failure to submit material on the due date will result in a point reduction for the assignment for each day late, to a maximum of three points. After this time, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned for that component. Changes to this policy will only be granted for medical and other such excused absences (*bone fide* documentation is required).