

**Spring 2015 -- Introduction to Gerontology**

**SOCI 3310/01 CRN 10265**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30 pm until 4:45 pm**

**Class Location: Social Science Building, Room #2025**

**Instructor: Dr. Evelina Sterling**

**Email: [esterlin@kennesaw.edu](mailto:esterlin@kennesaw.edu)**

**Office: TBA**

**Office Phone: TBA**

**Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30 am until 11 am and by appointment**

**Course Description:**

Introduction to the multi-disciplinary field of gerontology which provides an overview of aging, including history, biology, and psychology. More specifically, focus is given to how sociological theory and research discredits myths about older adults, including diversity, family life, health, retirement, housing, senior programs and services, and death and dying. This course is a required part of the formal Gerontology minor. This course may count as a free elective for all majors. Prerequisite: All students enrolled in this course must have taken SOCI2201: Principles of Sociology or PSYC1101: General Psychology

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this term, students enrolled in this class will be able to:

- Explain human aging from multiple disciplinary perspectives, such as sociology, psychology, human services, public health, biology, and public administration.
- Describe theories and methods used to explain human aging.
- Identify and explain national and global patterns of aging societies.
- Critique and evaluate programs and policies serving older adults.

**Required Course Materials:**

1. Quandagno, Jill (2014). *Aging & the Life Course: An Introduction to Social Gerontology* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: McGraw Hill.
2. D2L for additional readings

**PREPARING FOR SUCCESS!**

This course may be challenging if you are not interested in multidisciplinary aging. There is a lot of complex material to cover within a brief period of time. You must be a strong, self-directed learner with good time management skills to remain up-to-date with readings, writings, discussions, and assessments. As with most college level courses, students should expect to schedule three times the course credit hours for readings,

assignments, and studying. By giving yourself *approximately nine hours* each week throughout the term for this course, you should be on track for success.

### ***CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT***

In this class, we will engage in discussion of a variety of issues, some of which may be considered controversial. Ideas will be our central focus. As we examine ideas, we will likely have disagreements, as some ideas are often considered controversial. It is essential that we bring an open mind and respect for others opinions to the classroom.

Our readings, films, discussions, and group activities may broach many sensitive topics, including racism, sexuality, political, and religious views. We will engage these subjects in an intellectual, yet passionate manner. However, this material may offend some students or make them feel uncomfortable. If you think your discomfort may impede your engagement with class content, please see me immediately!

Please keep in mind that the student body is diverse and always refrain from making assumptions about who is or is not around you. We all have opinions, and it is okay to respectfully disagree with other people's comments. It is also okay to engage in passionate discussion. It is not okay to engage in actions that are hostile, derogatory, or disrespectful.

Please come to class prepared to participate and engage the material via discussions and class activities. Everyone should have something to contribute in class every day. However, we should all make every effort to ensure that every student gets an opportunity to participate.

If you have something to say, please raise your hand. Chatting with your neighbor or text messaging is distracting and will inspire me to call on you. Please turn off all cell phones and other technologies.

Let's create an environment where we can all have fun and enjoy the class this term!

### **Contacting the Instructor**

**Email is the best way to personally communicate with me.** If you send me an email at [esterlin@kennesaw.edu](mailto:esterlin@kennesaw.edu), please always include "*Gerontology 3301/01– YOUR NAME*" in the subject line in order to ensure a response! I will also have time to meet in person while I'm on campus. These meetings are by appointment only and must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

It is my goal to be a responsive educator and replying to your emails in a timely manner. However, just as I respect that students are usually balancing school schedules with work and family, I ask for your understanding regarding my response time as well. I do try to check my email at least twice a day Monday through Friday (once in the morning and once late afternoon or early evening) so I'm usually able to respond within 24 hours, although occasionally due to my schedule, it might take up to 48 to 72 hours. I do not typically check my email from late Friday afternoon until Monday morning so please do not expect an immediate response from me on the weekends or school holidays. In terms of grading, I usually provide feedback and scores within two weeks, although it is usually quicker.

### **Grading Criteria**

A = 90-100 = Excellent; Far exceeds expectations  
B = 80-89 = Good; Exceeds expectations  
C = 70-79 = Satisfactory; Meets minimum requirements  
D = 60-69 = Passing work less than satisfactory  
F = 59 and Below = Failing; Unsatisfactory Work

### **Grade Earning Assignments**

- Exams – 60% (Exam #1—20%; Exam #2—20%; Exam #3—20%)
- Papers/Writing Assignments (30% ):
  - Problems facing older adults paper – 5%
  - Gerontology Research Critique – 10%
  - Final Course Project Paper—15%
- Attendance, Participation and Preparedness – 10%

#### **1. EXAMS – 60% of total grade (20% Exam #1; 20% Exam #2; 20% Exam #3)**

Three (3) tests will be administered during this course. The test will consist of multiple choice and short answer. Additionally, exams are largely applied scenarios which require critical thinking skills rather than just memorizing and regurgitating information. These tests are not cumulative, and each tests will cover only material presented since the last test. However, you may be required to incorporate concepts learned throughout the term. Test dates are: 2/5; 3/12; 5/5

#### **2. PROBLEMS FACING OLDER ADULTS PAPER—5% Due: 1/27**

The objective of this paper is to encourage you to explore an area of interest and discuss how the chosen problem relates to those who experience a problem. Identify a problem that occurs for some older adults. Select only one problem; this can include issues related to developmental changes, biological problems, cognitive issues, personality and mental health, etc. Clearly identify the problem by 1) Defining the problem (why is this particular issue considered a “problem” for older adults?); 2) who and how many people experience the problem?; 3) when and/or why does the problem tend to occur?; 4) How does this problem occur?; 5) what are the current interventions/treatments available?; and 5) How might diversity (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or social class) impact this problem?

Papers should be at least two pages long and include at least two citations (articles or books) in addition to the textbook. Internet sites are not acceptable sources of information in this paper. Instead, use only peer reviewed articles or books. A cover page and a reference list must be included. *A specific grading rubric for this assignment will be provided before the due date.*

#### **3. GERONTOLOGY RESEARCH CRITIQUE – 10% Due: 2/26**

Because Sociology is a social science, it is critical that all sociology students understand the importance of research to the field. As a result, you will be required to critique a published peer-reviewed research article addressing any aspect of mental illness. This article can come from any professional or academic journal in any field, such as sociology, psychology, medicine, nursing, public health, or education. You will provide a 3-4 page critique in terms

of research purpose, findings, research design, and how it adds to the understanding of gerontology. Also, be prepared to discuss your article and critique in class as part of a group discussion. Detailed instructions regarding this assignment will be distributed during the second week of classes. The written critique as well as the group discussion are due on **2/26**. *Details and specific instructions about this paper will be distributed in class on 1/29.*

**4. FINAL COURSE PROJECT PAPER – 15% of total grade DUE: 4/14**

A final course project will due date on **4/14**. This project will count for 15% of your final grade and will consist of writing a 5-6 page paper requiring you to apply the concepts learned in the class to you data collected by you as you investigate the question “What does it mean to age in our society?” Overall, you will be required to interview someone who is 60 years old or older about their experiences and expectations with aging. *Details and specific instructions about this paper will be distributed in class on 1/29.*

***Paper Submission Details***

All submitted papers are expected to be typed using 12 pt Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced (unless otherwise noted), and paginated. There should not be any extra space between paragraphs (if using Word, under “home” the “paragraph,” in the dropdown, there is a box you can check “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style”). Additionally, titles/headings should not be excessive—and any cover page is not included in the total number of pages. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a 5 point grade deduction.

Additionally, your paper must be saved and uploaded with your name in the title. Document uploaded should be saved as “LastName, FirstName—Name of Assignment.” For example: Sterling, Evelina—Final Paper. Failure to save and submit your file with correct label may result in a 5 point grade deduction.

***Further information about the Final Course Project Paper will be posted during Week #3.***

**5. ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND PREPAREDNESS – 10% of total grade Due: Weekly**

The class sessions will be a mixture of didactic and interactive, with the opportunity for student participation and discussion. Students are expected to complete the required readings by the date assigned and be prepared to share their thoughts on the reading with other members of the class.

In order to calculate this portion of your grade, I will monitor attendance as well as assign in class group work/discussions throughout the semester. Additionally, I will ask for volunteers (or randomly select certain group if needed) to present their summaries/ findings/conclusions to the rest of the class. If you are in class and prepared to participate individually or with your group, you will receive full credit. If not, you will receive a zero. You are allowed up to three absences before it will negatively impact your grade at which point one full percentage point will be deducted from your final grade for each additional absence.

**Highlights and Review Days**

For each module, I have included a “Highlights and Review Day” for the class immediately preceding the exam. The purpose of this class is to expand further on any interesting topics, provide the opportunity to apply key concepts, and/or answer any questions about the covered topics. I may supplement the course with additional relevant videos and/or guest speakers during these days as well. It also gives us flexibility without affecting the rest of the schedule if class is unexpectedly canceled or cut short for any unforeseen circumstances. I expect that all students will attend these important classes as information shared during these classes will also be included on your tests.

### **Being Late or Missing Class**

As with any college level course, regular class attendance is expected. Additionally, I expect you to be on time for each class. The doors will be closed and you will not be able to enter the classroom after the lecture has started (constituting an absence). Many of the exam questions will be drawn from the lectures and discussions so it is essential you attend every class in order to do well in this course. I do understand that occasionally life happens that may interfere with you coming to class. If you must miss a class, you do not need to provide me with an explanation. More importantly, do not ask me whether you missed anything important (if the material you missed wasn't important, it wouldn't have been covered in class). Do not ask me for lecture notes—ask your classmates. I will assume that you are serious about class, and I presume that if you miss class you have a very good reason (i.e., you are very sick, caring for someone who is very sick, etc.). If your absences become chronic, or you anticipate chronic absences then it's time to consult with me. All that said, if you blow off class and do so on a regular basis, your grades will suffer.

### **Late Assignments & Excuses**

Due dates for assignments are non-negotiable, and all assignments must be completed on time. You are given plenty of notification regarding all assignment due dates, including assessments. Do not miss the due dates as no changes or extensions will be granted without prior approval due to an extreme emergency. You will receive a zero for a missed or late assignment, and no partial credit will be given. All assignments must be turned in to me in class at the *beginning of class* on the date it is due. Do NOT fax me, leave your assignment under any door, in any wall pocket outside a door, or mailbox.

Only an extreme emergency with documentation (such as an accident report or emergency room receipt copies sent to me) will be considered. In these cases only, you MUST contact me before the due date or exam date or *immediately* afterwards if the emergency occurred on your way to class. Only on a case-by-case basis, I may consider extending partial credit for completing the assignment within one week (this is NOT available for the final exam!). If you miss either Exam #1 or Exam #2 then you will be given an essay make-up exam.

If we have to cancel class due to snow or inclement weather, all assignments (including scheduled exams) will be due at the very next class period.

### **Extra Credit**

I do not provide individual opportunities for extra credit or to earn “extra points.” In rare instances, I might curve an exam if there are particular questions that nearly all the students missed. No promises, but if your final grade is borderline (within one point of the next grade up only), I might consider your attendance, participation, and preparation.

**KSU ADA Statement Special Needs and Accommodations Statement:**

Kennesaw State University provides program accessibility and reasonable accommodations for persons defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Disabled Student Support Services via Ms. Nastassia Sanabria, Assistant Director for disabled Student Support Services, at 770-423-6443 (V) or 770-423-6480 (TDD). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation directly from the Office for Disabled Student Support Services. Office for Disabled Student Support website: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu\\_dev/dsss/dsss.html](http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html)

**Academic Integrity**

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Section II of this Code addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to the University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.

***HOPE YOU ENJOY THE COURSE!***

**COURSE SCHEDULE FOR INTRODUCTION TO GERONTOLOGY**

**COURSE SCHEDULE FOR INTRODUCTION TO GERONTOLOGY (IN PERSON)**

<b>Class #</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b> <small>(All readings come from <u>Aging and the Life Course</u> unless otherwise noted)</small>	<b>Assessments</b>
#1 -- R 1/8	Course Introduction	Syllabus	
<b>MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO GERONTOLOGY</b>			
#2 -- T 1/13	Myths & Stereotypes about Aging	Ch. 1, pp. 10-14 (Ageism & media)	
#3 – R 1/15	What is Gerontology? Part 1	Ch. 1, pp. 1-5 (The field of gerontology) Ch. 1, pp. 20-23 (Careers)	
# 4 – T 1/20	What is Gerontology? Part 2	Ch. 2, pp. 28-29 (Life course framework) Ch. 2, pp. 33-43 (Identifying Life Course Events)	
#5 -- R 1/22	Studying Aging Part 1: Population	Ch. 1, pp. 6-10 (Defining old age; cohorts & generations) Ch. 2, pp. 29-30 (Age, period & cohort effects) Ch. 2, 30-32 (Types of research: cross sectional, longitudinal, qualitative)	
#6 -- T 1/27	Studying Aging Part 2: Demographics	Ch.4, ALL (Demography of Aging)	<b>PROBLEMS FACING OLDER ADULTS PAPER DUE</b>
#7 -- R 1/29	Studying Aging Part 3: Social Sciences	Ch. 3, ALL (Theories of aging: origins & micro theories, macro theories)	<i>Instructions for Gerontology Research Critique and Final Paper Project will be distributed</i>
#8 – T 2/3	Highlights and Review Day		
#9 – R 2/5	Exam #1		<b>Exam #1 (Ch. 1, 2, 3, &amp; 4)</b>
<b>MODULE 2: THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS</b>			
#10 – T 2/10	Biology of Aging: Part 1 Traditional, Current, and Futuristic	Ch. 6, ALL (Biological perspectives on aging)	
#11 – R 2/12	NO CLASS		
#12 -- T 2/17	Biology of Aging, Part 2	Ch. 6, ALL (Biological perspectives on aging)	
#13 – R 2/19	Social Determinants of Health	Ch. 11, pp. 249-262 (Social determinants of health)	
#14 – T 2/24	Psychology of Aging, Part 1	Ch. 7, ALL (Psychological perspectives on aging)	

<b>Class #</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b> (All readings come from <u>Aging and the Life Course</u> unless otherwise noted)	<b>Assessments</b>
#15 – R 2/26	Psychology of Aging, Part 2	Ch. 7, ALL (Psychological perspectives on aging)	<b>GERONTOLOGY RESEARCH CRITIQUE DUE</b>
#16 – T 3/3	Aging Family Relations	Ch. 8, ALL (Family relationships & social support systems)	
#17 – R 3/5	Caring for Older Adults	Ch. 11, pp. 263-267 (The elderly in the health care system) Ch. 12, pp.271-280 (Family care)	
#18– T 3/10	Highlights and Review		
#19 – R 3/12	Exam #2		<b>Exam #2 (Ch. 6, 7, 8, 11, &amp; 12)</b>
<b>MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR AN AGING POPULATION</b>			
#20 – T 3/18	Housing Options	Ch. 9, ALL (Living arrangements)	
#21 – R 3/19	Housing Options	Ch. 12, pp. 280-292 (Home care, intuitional care, nursing home care)	
#22 – T 3/24	Work & Retirement	Ch. 10, ALL (Work & retirement)	
#23 – R 3/26	Financial Implications	Ch. 14, ALL (The economics of aging)	
# 24 – T 3/31	Financial Implications	Ch. 15, ALL (Poverty & inequality)	
#25 – R 4/2	Film Study	51 Birch Street	
#27 – T 4/7	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
#28 –R 4/9	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
#29 – T 4/14	Personal Experiences with Older Adults	Discussion of older adult interviews for end of course project paper	<b>FINAL COURSE PAPER PROJECT DUE</b>
#26 – R 4/16	Public Policies & Programs	Ch. 16, ALL (Politics of aging)	
#30 – T 4/21	Public Policies & Programs	Ch. 5, ALL (Old age & the welfare state)	
#31 – R 4/23	Death, dying & loss	Ch. 13, ALL (Dying, death & loss)	
#32 – T 4/28	Highlights and Review		
<b>EXAM WEEK 4/30-5/6</b>	<b>Test Day TUESDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> 3:30 PM UNTIL 5:30 PM</b>		<b>Exam #3 (Ch. 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 &amp; 15)</b>

**\*\*The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus throughout the semester as needed.\*\***