

**Spring 2015 -- Introduction to Gerontology -- ONLINE**

**SOCI 3310/W01 CRN 10492**

**Instructor: Dr. Evelina Sterling**

**Email: [esterlin@kennesaw.edu](mailto:esterlin@kennesaw.edu) or within D2L (preferred contact option)**

**Office: TBA**

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

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE: This class is an online class using Desire2Learn (D2L).**

**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. Module Guides found on D2L provide an overview of the topic, graded assignments, due dates, and checklist for self-directed learning.

**PREPARING FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE CLASS!**

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, writing, and D2L 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.

The online format of this course requires that you have a hard-wired (not wireless) high speed Internet, and already possess the basic knowledge on Internet usage (such as browsers and navigation). In addition, student should have access in multiple locations, such as home, work, campus, and/or residences of family members or friends).

### **Contacting the Instructor**

You are required to utilize your D2L account and check it regularly for periodic communications. **D2L 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 Online – YOUR NAME*” in the subject line in order to ensure a response! For general questions that are not private, please post it in the “Ask Dr. Sterling” Discussion Board. I will also have time to meet in person while I’m on campus as well as by telephone, chats or video conferencing on D2L. These meetings are by appointment only and must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

### **Email Responses and Grading Turnaround Times**

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 and the D2L site 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.

### **Connecting with Your Classmates**

Just because this is online class, I still encourage you to interact with your classmates. Often, they are a great source of information and assistance, especially when you cannot reach me immediately. The best place to reach out to fellow students is on the “Student Cyber Café.” This non-graded area of the course is the proper place for students to help each other about something covered in the syllabus, the schedule, or where to find something in the course D2L site. Postings and replies should be information beneficial for all students. Do not spam the class with non-course related information under any circumstance! Also, remember these messages are not private! Although virtual communication may be less threatening, be cautious not to share inappropriate personal details. Always maintain professionalism, academic integrity, proper netiquette, and all course policies and procedures are in effect. Discussions will be monitored, and the instructor reserves the right to delete problematic postings and/or prevent an individual student from posting again.

### **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**

- Course Introductions – 5%
- Exams – 55% (Exam #1—15%; Exam #2—20%; Exam #3—20%)
- Final Course Project Paper—20%
- Chapter Quizzes (best 5 quiz grades)—5%
- Weekly Discussion Board Participation – 15%

**1. *Course Introductions -- 5% of total grade DUE: no later than Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> (before the rest of the course materials can be accessed)***

**Part 1: Online Introduction:** This is a two-part assignment worth 5% your total grade. First, you will offer a brief introduction to the class via the online discussion board—this introduction should be relatively concise, but offer a general introduction of yourself to your classmates. Generally speaking, this would take the form a solid paragraph and would engage some information about what you are majoring in, perhaps your status/year, career/job information if relevant, why you are interested in gerontology, and maybe a few quirky or interesting things about yourself.

Additionally, please post a photo to your D2L profile (this occurs in the main D2L page where you logged in – under “My Settings” then “Profile”). Seeing your photo helps me feel more connected to you as a student and helps me more readily recognize someone—particularly in receiving emails and reading the discussion boards. If for some reason you do not wish to post a personal picture of yourself, please feel free to post another image of personal significance, or you could create a “cartoon” version of yourself online as well

**Part 2: Introduction Paper for Instructor:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this assignment will be to write a more formal longer self-introduction that is intended solely for the instructor (hopefully it is clear that this should be different in tone and structure from your online introduction). This introduction should be minimally one page in length, but should not exceed two pages. Overall, it is not to your benefit to skimp on content/length on any course paper.

In this introduction to the instructor, you might include some of the aspects also on the discussion board, but you should expand and offer more in depth information on yourself. Herein, you might speak more at length about now only where you stand academically currently, but what aspirations you have for the future as far as education and career? What aspects of the course are you particularly interested in topically? What do you think the biggest challenges will be for you in terms of taking on online course? You may share some of your family/social background if you feel it is useful. This is fairly open-ended but is intended to help me to “know” you better and be better able to offer appropriate guidance and feedback over the course of the semester. Please write this as a more formal introductory topic (paragraph format, not stream of consciousness, etc.). Additionally, this introduction will also help me to gauge your writing skills to hopefully advise in advance if the writing center would be a resource you should consider before submitting the final course project paper. While content is a central aspect of how papers will be evaluated, grammar and structure are also important aspects of writing, especially in an upper level course. Writing skills should be constantly growing and developing to prepare you for written

communication in the working/professional world. Obviously, writing skills will be particularly important in an online course where nearly all interactions will be in written form!

## **2. EXAMS – 55% of total grade (15% Exam #1; 20% Exam #2; 20% Exam #3)**

Three (3) exams will be administered during this course. All exams will be open book and will mainly consist of approximately 60-80 multiple choice, true/false, and matching. These exams are not cumulative, and each exam will cover only material presented since the last exam. However, you may be required to incorporate concepts learned throughout the term. Additionally, exams are largely applied scenarios which require critical thinking skills rather than just memorizing and regurgitating information. You will have a limited amount of time to complete the exam online so you will need to be a strong self-directed learner; pace yourself; stay current in readings and assignments; and prepare for the exam ahead of time. Waiting until the exam to go over the material and learn the concepts will not prove successful. Exam dates include: 2/4-2/10; 3/11-3/17; 4/29-5/5

### ***Taking Exams on D2L***

The easiest way to find exams on D2L is to click on the QUIZZES button. An alternative way is from the Course Home and click LEARNING MODULES--the last week of each of the three Modules (Weeks 5, 10, and 17) contain the link to the Exam. **During each “exam week,” the exam will remain posted on D2L from 9 am Wednesday until 12 Midnight on Tuesday so you will have seven full days to access and complete the exam.** Read through all the instructions the first time you take the exam. Then, click on START QUIZ. Questions are displayed one at a time, where you must answer before receiving the next question, and you cannot go back and change the answer. When prompted to finish, submit for grading. View your score under GRADES after the exam expires and everyone in the course has completed testing (usually a week after expiration). You cannot print or view questions/answers. Please contact me to discuss your incorrect responses.

VERY IMPORTANT – Do not complete the exam wirelessly! D2L may not record your answers, yet your attempt will be used. Instead, use a hard-wired connection

ALSO VERY IMPORTANT—You have only one chance to complete the exam, and there is a time limit (usually 90 minutes). Keep track of your time remaining by looking at the timer.

VERY, VERY IMPORTANT—The exams are scored electronically. You have one chance to choose or change the response. You must click to save the answer for each question and get to the next question. Be sure a checkmark appears for each question before submitting. Do not click on the next question unless you choose not to respond to a question. Otherwise, in any of these situations, D2L will score you zero points on each unanswered and/or unsaved question; I have no way of correcting your error, making your e-score final.

MOST IMPORTANT—EMAIL ME IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ENCOUNTER ANY EXAM PROBLEMS! I will make a point to check my email more often (including on the weekend and after hours) during the exam period.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT—Even though these exams are open book and open notes (due to the nature of an online course), these exams are not designed for you to look up each questions as you take the exam. You **MUST** complete all the readings and assignments well before the exam date AND study thoroughly beforehand (I have a study guide posted in the “exam week” folder). These exams should also be an accurate reflection of your own

work and effort, so do not plan to work with anyone else (in class or outside of class) while taking these exams as it will be considered cheating.

**3. CHAPTER QUIZZES – 5% of total grade DUE: Weekly (only 5 best quiz grades will be recorded)**

These quizzes are to assist you with your general comprehension of the material. As a result, questions are largely definitional. However, the quizzes are not necessarily indicative of what will be on the exam. You will still need to prepare for applying what you have learned. Although some weeks do not contain a quiz, most of the weeks, especially those with a lot of complex, material do, and I encourage you to take all of these quizzes. In terms of grading, I will record the 5 highest quiz grades (one from Module 1; two from Module 2; and two from Module 3) and average them for 5% of your total grade. Each week, a new quiz will be posted corresponding with the books readings and must be completed by the end of the module in order to receive credit. However, I encourage you to take them on a weekly basis in order to stay current with the material and not fall behind.

You will be able to view the quiz questions as well as the answers you got wrong after everyone has taken the weekly quiz at end of each module. You will be allowed to view the quiz feedback for 20 minutes starting the day after the quiz has closed (which usually falls on a Wednesday).

**4. FINAL COURSE PROJECT PAPER – 20% of total grade DUE: 3/26**

A final course project will due date on **Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm**. This project will count for 20% of your final grade and will consist of writing a 6-7 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. *Detailed instructions will be distributed through D2L during Week #3 (1/21).*

***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), an 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/heading 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 you 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. DISCUSSION BOARDS – 15% of total grade DUE: Weekly**

While your responses won’t be graded per se, points are earned for proper participation each week. In the discussion boards, students are REQUIRED to post to every discussion board by responding to the weekly question about that specific week’s content. These questions will encourage you to apply what you have learned through

the readings. Additionally, you must also reply to at least one other post with more details, examples, or corrections based on the course content. A total of 15 Discussion Boards will be posted throughout the term (one for each of the 13 weeks of content plus a course project discussion board during week #13 and a final course discussion board during week #16). Essentially, each completed discussion board participation will count for 1% of your final grade. No partial credit or extensions will be granted for discussion board participation—it is either 100% (you participated by both answering the weekly question and responding to another post within the assigned dates) or 0% (you did not complete both of these things). While the discussion boards will remain available for the entire module, I encourage you post weekly in order to stay on track and not fall behind.

### ***Posting to Discussion Boards on D2L***

You can locate the discussion boards by clicking on “Communication with Your Teacher and Classmates” from the Home Page as well as through each week of the three modules. In order to get credit for participating in the Discussion Boards, you need to both 1) Post at least once with a thoughtful response to the weekly question posted by the Instructor and 2) Provide a thoughtful response to one of your classmates’ responses offering additional detail.

**POSTING**—The Instructor will post an open-ended thought-provoking question based on the week’s topic and readings to stimulate discussion. Your response should include a descriptive topic written in the subject line to clearly give others a sense of the discussion. In the body of your post, focus on original thought and opinion about the material. To further show your understanding, provide an original real-world example or personal experience which supports or refutes the material. **EACH POSTING SHOULD BE NO LESS THAN 10 SUBSTANTIVE LINES.**

**REPLIES**—There can be multiple replies to each post, as long as each reply remains focused on the original topic and continues to extend the conversation. Your replies should clearly state if you agree or disagree with the substance of the original post, extend the conversation with additional original thought or opinion about the material, and clearly provide another unique original real-world example or personal experience which supports or refutes the position. **AGAIN, EACH REPLY SHOULD BE NO LESS THAN 10 SUBSTANTIVE LINES.**

### ***“OPTIONAL” READINGS***

For each week, I will post optional readings, links, and resources for those students interested in learning more about the topic. Information from these readings will not be included in any of your graded assignments. However, these readings will contain important information that will help you better understand the sociological significance of gerontology which you will find beneficial if you decide to continue your education and/or work with older adults.

### ***POTENTIAL EXTRA CREDIT***

I do not provide individuals opportunities for extra credit or “extra points.” Rarely, I will curve the exams if there are specific questions which were missed by most of the class. No promises, but if your final grade is borderline (within 1 point of the next letter grade up), I may consider providing extra credit for the following accomplishments: 1) Taking ALL optional self-quizzes and scoring at least 60% correct on each and 2) Providing quality help in the Student Cyber Café at least once per module (Module 1, Module 2, and Module 3).

### ***Late Assignments & Excuses***

Due dates for assignments are non-negotiable, and all assignments must be completed on time. You will be given plenty of notification regarding assignment due dates and all assignments (including assessments) will remain posted for a set period of time. Do not miss the expiration dates as no changes or extensions will be granted. You will receive a zero for a missed or late assignment, and no partial credit will be given. All assignments must be turned in online through D2L. 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 as a .pdf or .jpg file in D2L email) will be considered. In these cases only, you MUST contact me before the due date. I may consider extending a 70% partial credit for completing the assignment within one week (this is NOT available for the final exam!). Warning: doctor notes must cover the entire time an exam or assignment was available online and must also be accompanied by a visit receipt date during (not after) the assignment availability time.

***What if I have a technology problem?***

It is your responsibility to pace and complete the work on schedule. Sometimes circumstances beyond our control (such as upgrades, software and/or hardware failure, and/or computer incompatibility) prevent us from using D2L. Note that computer/technical failure and/or waiting too late to complete the assignment DOES NOT EXCUSE YOU from completing the course assignments and requirements on time. You know the course schedule for graded items now, each is available for an extended period of time, and you have enough notice to make sure your work is completed. It is best to work early in case you have to try again before the deadline.

**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**

*(All weeks run from Wednesday morning until Tuesday evening)*

<b>Week # (Wed – Tues)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Book Readings (All readings come from Aging and the Life Course except where otherwise noted)</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
	<b>MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO GERONTOLOGY</b>		<b><i>ALL MODULE #1 QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION BOARDS WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE UNTIL 11:59 PM ON 2/3</i></b>
WEEK 1: Jan 7	Course Introduction Myths & Stereotypes about Aging	Syllabus Ch. 1, pp. 10-14 (Ageism & media)	<b>1. Introduction Assignments Due by 11:59 pm on 1/15</b> 2. Discussion Board #1
WEEK 2: Jan 14	What is Gerontology?	Ch. 1, pp. 1-5 (The field of gerontology) Ch. 1, pp. 20-23 (Careers) Ch. 2, pp. 28-29 (Life course framework) Ch. 2, pp. 33-43 (Identifying Life Course Events)	1. Discussion Board #2 2. What is Gerontology? Quiz
WEEK 3: Jan 21	Studying Aging Part 1: Population & Demography	Ch. 1, pp. 6-10 (Defining old age; cohorts & generations) Ch. 2, pp. 29-30 (Age, period & cohort effects) Ch.4, ALL (Demography of Aging)	1. Discussion Board #3 2. Population/Demographics Quiz 3. <i>Course Final Project Paper Instructions Will Be Posted on 1/21</i>
WEEK 4: Jan 28	Studying Aging Part 2: Social Sciences	Ch. 2, 30-32 (Types of research: cross sectional, longitudinal, qualitative) Ch. 3, ALL (Theories of aging: origins & micro theories, macro theories)	1. Discussion Board #4 2. Roles and History Quiz
WEEK 5: Feb 4	<b>EXAM WEEK</b>		<b>1. Exam #1 (available b/t 9 am 2/4 until 11:59 pm 2/10)</b>
	<b>MODULE 2: THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS</b>		<b><i>ALL MODULE #2 QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION BOARDS WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE UNTIL 11:59 PM ON 3/10</i></b>
WEEK 6: Feb 11	Biology of Aging: Traditional, Current, and Futuristic	Ch. 6, ALL (Biological perspectives on aging) Ch. 11, pp. 249-262 (Social determinants of health)	1. Discussion Board #5 2. Biology Quiz
WEEK 7: Feb 18	Psychology of Aging	Ch. 7, ALL (Psychological perspectives on aging)	1. Discussion Board #6 2. Psychology Quiz
WEEK 8: Feb 25	Aging Family Relations	Ch. 8, ALL (Family relationships & social support systems)	1. Discussion Board #7 2. Family Quiz
WEEK 9: Mar 4	Caring for Older Adults	Ch. 11, pp. 263-267 (The elderly in the health care system) Ch. 12, pp.271-280 (Family care)	1. Discussion Board #8 2. Health Quiz
WEEK 10: Mar 11	<b>EXAM WEEK</b>		<b>1. Exam #2 (available b/t 9 am 3/11 – 11:59 pm 3/17)</b>

<b>Week # (Wed – Tues)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Book Readings (All readings come from Aging and the Life Course except where otherwise noted)</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
	<b>MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR AN AGING POPULATION</b>		<b>ALL MODULE #3 QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION BOARDS WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE UNTIL 11:59 PM ON 4/28</b>
WEEK 11: Mar 18	Housing Options	Ch. 9, ALL (Living arrangements) Ch. 12, pp. 280-292 (Home care, intuitional care, nursing home care)	1. Discussion Board #9 2. Housing Quiz
WEEK 12: Mar 25	Work & Retirement	Ch. 10, ALL (Work & retirement)	1. Discussion Board #10 2. Retirement Quiz 3. <b>Course Project Due Thursday 3/26 at 11:59 pm</b>
WEEK 13: Apr 1	Financial Implications	Ch. 14, ALL (The economics of aging) Ch. 15, ALL (Poverty & inequality)	1. Discussion Board #11 2. Social Security Quiz 3. Course Project Feedback Discussion Board
WEEK 14: Apr 8	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>NO CLASSES</b>	
WEEK 15: Apr 15	Public Policies & Programs	Ch. 16, ALL (Politics of aging) Ch. 5, ALL (Old age & the welfare state)	1. Discussion Board #12 2. Medicare Quiz
WEEK 16: Apr 22	Death, dying & loss	Ch. 13, ALL (Dying, death & loss)	1. Discussion Board #13 2. Death Quiz 3. Final Course Discussion Board
WEEK 17: Apr 29	<b>KSU FINAL EXAM WEEK</b>		1. <b>Exam #3 (available b/t 9 am on 4/29 – 11:59 pm on 5/5</b>

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