

**Sociology 29  
Spring 2009  
Fri. 1:15-3:45**

**Prof. Roxanne Friedenfels  
Gilbert House, Rm. 24, X3642  
and by appointment**

## **SOCIOLOGY OF AGING (revised syllabus)**

### **Course Description and Goals**

This course will introduce you to the key concepts, main theoretical perspectives, and important substantive issues of the sociology of aging. Course credit is available for sociology and for the public health and women's and gender studies minors. Among the central issues explored are gender differences in aging. The course will help you explore your own feelings about aging, and will examine public policy as it has been applied to aging.

### **General Rules**

The following rules will help ensure that class proceeds smoothly. Good manners count in class, as elsewhere in life!

1. Come to class on time (frequent tardiness will lower your grade).
2. Turn off cell phones and other devices that might make noise and disrupt the class.
3. Computers may be used to take notes, but not for any other activity.
4. Print out all written assignments and turn them in at the beginning of class. Do NOT send written assignments by email unless you have been given explicit permission.

### **EVALUATION**

Late work will receive a lower grade. Work which is more than a week late will not be accepted.

### **Evaluation: Participation, Attendance, and Tardiness**

Your participation in this class is critical for its success and for your learning. You will be expected to speak in class. Some self-evaluation of your participation will be required. To receive the

grade for which you have contracted, you cannot have more than the following number of absences:

To receive a grade in **A range**: not more than one unexcused absence

To receive a grade in **B range**: not more than two unexcused absences

To receive a grade in **C range**: not more than three unexcused absences

To receive a grade in **D range**: not more than four unexcused absences

To get an excused absence, you need a note from a doctor or other authority.

**Four instances of tardiness will count as one absence.** Please be courteous and come to class on time. Participation and attendance are **15 percent** of your grade.

### **Evaluation: Reading Summaries**

You will be expected to do a **three sentence summary of each reading. Summaries must be typed.** Summaries will be collected **eight times** over the course of the semester. They will be graded with a **check or check minus**. A check minus indicates the need for more effort on the summaries.

Reading summaries are **15 percent** of your final grade.

### **Evaluation: Short Paper**

You will be required to do a short paper on theories of aging. **The paper will be graded on both content and on how well your paper is written.** If you have any doubts about your writing, please use the Writing Center.

The paper will be worth **10 percent** of your grade.

**Evaluation: Exams**

There will be two exams. The final exam is cumulative. The first exam is worth 15 percent of your grade. The final exam is worth 25 percent of your grade. Thus, **40 percent** of your final grade comes from exams.

**Evaluation: Interview Project Papers**

You will also do an interview project, for which you will interview an individual who is 65 or over about their life and the experience of aging. Explore with the person how race, class, and gender have affected their lives and their aging. Your paper should be **10-12 pages** long. **A hard copy of your paper is due in class on May 1; do not send me your paper electronically unless I give you special permission.** Also on May 1, we will have an "elder speak"; some of the elders interviewed will be invited to class to share their experience with all of us.

Women's studies students must interview a woman for their interview project.

Project paper grades are **20 percent** of your overall grade in the course. **You will be graded both on content and on how well your paper is written. If you have any doubts about your writing, please use the Writing Center.**

**Academic Integrity:** Evidence of plagiarism will be referred to the appropriate university committee. You should have a copy of the Drew booklet Standards of Academic Integrity: Guidelines and Procedures, and use it. If you do not have a copy, please let me know and I will get one for you.

**Academic Accommodations:** Should you require academic accommodations, you must file a request with the Office of Educational Affairs (BC 114, extension 3327). It is your responsibility to self-identify with the Office of Educational Affairs and to provide me with the appropriate documentation from that office at least one week prior to any request for specific course accommodations. There are no retroactive accommodations.

**Books**

The following books may be purchased at the University Bookstore:

Aging, The Individual, and Society, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, by Susan Hillier and Georgia M. Barrow. This is a basic introductory textbook on aging.

Having Our Say by Sadie and Bessie Delany. These are the remembrances of two African American sisters who were each over 100 years old at the time the book was published.

Tuesdays With Morrie by Mitch Album. This is a thought provoking discussion of dying, death--and life.

**Coursepack (PAC)**

There are additional assigned articles in the coursepack. Purchase of the coursepack is required. Checks should be made out to: Drew University Sociology Dept. I will let you know when the coursepack is ready.

**Calendar and Assignments**

The topic of each class period is in bold type; the assigned readings follow in regular type.

**JAN. 30: OVERVIEW OF COURSE/INTRODUCTIONS**

Hillier & Barrow:

Chapter 1: Aging in America

Chapter 14: Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture

**FEB. 6: STEREOTYPES AND IMAGES/LIFE CYCLES**

Hillier & Barrow:

Chapter 2: Stereotypes and Images

PAC:

Agosin, M. "Mi Estomago" (poem)

Thomas, W. "The Doctrine of Youth's Perfection"  
and "The Hidden Powers of Age"

Weitz, R. "I'll Dye Until I Die"

**LIFE CYCLES**

Hillier & Barrow:

Chapter 3: Theories in Adult Development

PAC:

Rader, V. "Social Construction of Life Cycles Crises"

West, J. "Sixteen"

Clunis, D. "Identity"

Feb. 6: Last day to add a semester long class with instructor's signature.

**FEB. 13: THEORY**

Hillier & Barrow:

Chapter 4: Theories in Social Gerontology

PAC:

Gergen and Gergen, "The New Aging: Self-Construction and Social Values"

Holstein, "Commentary: The "New Aging": Imagining Alternative Futures"

**RELATIONSHIPS****FILM: BIG MAMA** (39 minutes) Drew Cable Channel 46**Tues, Feb. 17 at 9 pm****Wed., Feb. 18 at 6 pm****Thurs., Feb. 19 at 7 pm****FEB 20: RELATIONSHIPS, cont.****Paper on theory due**

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Chapter 5: Friends, Family, and Community

Chapter 6: Intimacy and Sexuality

PAC:

Cohler, B. &amp; A. Hostetler, "Aging, Intimate Relationships, and Life Story among Gay Men"

Schoonmaker, C., "Aging Lesbians: Bearing the Burden of Triple Shame"

**FEB 27: OLDEST-OLD/ELDERCARE**

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Chapter 12: The Oldest-Old and Caregiving

PAC:

Thompson, "Gendered Caregiving of Husbands and Sons"

Anderson, R. "I Never Sang For My Father"

McQueen, "Employers Expand Elder-care Benefits"

**DRIVING****FILM: DRIVING MISS DAISY** (1 hour, 39 minutes)

Drew Cable Channel 46

**Tues., March 3 at 7 pm****Wed., March 4 at 9:30 pm****Thurs., March 5 at 9 pm****(for March 6 class discussion; the film and related article assigned for that date will not be covered on the exam)**

**MARCH 6: EXAM****DRIVING, cont.**

PAC:

Burkhardt, J. "Limitations of Mass Transportation and Individual Vehicle Systems for Older Persons"

**MARCH 13: Spring break**

**MARCH 20:** Delany, S. and B. Having Our Say

**MARCH 27: WORK, LEISURE, RETIREMENT, FINANCES**

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW SUBJECT DUE

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Chapter 8: Work and Leisure

Chapter 9: Finances and Life Styles

PAC:

Cruikshank, M. "Gender, Class, and Ethnicity"

**APRIL 3: PLACES TO LIVE**

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Chapter 10: Living Environments

PAC:

Winslow, T. "Grandma"

Ferver, E. "Old Man Minick"

Shield, R. "Separation and Adaptation"

Rust, L. "Another Part of the Country"

Thomas, W. "The Eden Alternative"

April 3: Last day to withdraw from a semester long class with a grade of "W."

**APRIL 10: Good Friday, no classes****MENTAL HEALTH/ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE****FILM: COMPLAINTS OF A DUTIFUL DAUGHTER** (45 minutes)

Drew Cable Channel 46

Tues., April 14 at 8 pm

Wed., April 15 at 7 pm

Thurs., April 16 at 10 pm (for discussion April 17)

**APRIL 17: MENTAL HEALTH/ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, cont.**

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Chapter 11: Mental Health

PAC:

Roszak, T. "The Trouble with Wisdom"

Pipher, M. "Homesick for Heaven"

**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

PAC:

Levens, N. "Buried Alive"

Manly, J. and R. Mayeux, "Ethnic Differences in Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease" (excerpt) from Critical Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in Late Life**APRIL 24: PHYSICAL CHANGES**

Hillier &amp; Barrow:

Ch. 7: Physical Health and Well-Being

PAC:

Vallient, G. "Healthy Aging: A Second Pass"

Cruikshank, M. "The Politics of Healthy Aging"

Ulman, D. "The Treatment of Chronic Disease"

**MAY 1: DYING, DEATH--AND LIFE**Album, M. Tuesdays With Morrie



**MAY 4 (last class; May 4 is a "Drew Friday"):  
INTERVIEW PROJECT PAPERS DUE/  
ELDER SPEAK**

**TAKING ACTION/NEW DIRECTIONS**

Hillier & Barrow:

Chapter 16: Politics, Policies, and Programs

PAC:

Palmore, E. "Strategies for Change"

**FINAL EXAM**

