

syllabus

**SOC/GTY/WMS 463/563: Gender and Aging**

**Spring 2013**

Mondays and Wednesday, 11:15 - 12:30 p.m.

365 Upham Hall

**Revised 2/13/13**

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. and by appointment.

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**Catalog description:** This course examines how gender and age constructions shape the aging process, with particular focus on how various social, psychological, physical and cultural factors affect men, women, and transgendered persons differently as they grow older.

**Format:** I will be taking a social constructionist view toward gender and aging in this course. I'd like you to think of this course as the opportunity to engage in deep and thoughtful discussion, the type you might have at a café late at night when trying to solve all of the problems of the world. The course will be conducted as a reading and discussion seminar rather than a lecture course. I expect you to complete the readings for the date they are assigned *and to bring the readings to class with you each day*. Close, critical engagement with the readings is necessary for informed and thoughtful in-class discussion. You must also turn in one critical question a week based on a class reading. I will post the assignments on Niikha at least one week prior to your question being due. At times, I will be asking you to lead discussions and to participate in class "debates" for a given topic.

**Required texts:** a packet of readings is available at Oxford Copy Shop.

**Requirements:**

(a) three take-home essay exams (each worth 20% of overall course grade). Exam due dates are **Monday, February 18** and **Monday, April 15**. Exam questions will be distributed one week prior.

(b) Weekly critical questions (worth 20% of overall grade)

(c) Group work (worth 10% of overall grade)

(d) Active participation in class (10% of overall grade). Evaluated through regular attendance, clear demonstration of preparation for class discussions, and informed participation in class discussions.

**Attendance Policy:** I expect that students will be present for every class. Students with excessive absences (5 or more classes) will be dropped from the course. No late or missing work will be accepted.

**Sociology Program Goals:** The Sociology Program Committee agreed to include the complete list of program goals on syllabi for all courses above the introductory level in order to more fully emphasize and integrate them throughout the student's experience in the major. The goals with an asterisk are particularly emphasized in Gender and Aging:

\*To understand the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality;

\*To understand the role of theory in sociology;

To understand the role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology;

To understand basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations;

\*To understand how social structure operates;

To understand the reciprocal relationships between the individual and society;

To understand the micro/macro emphasis;

\*To think critically;

\*To understand the negative effects of inequality.

**Role of Course in the Miami Plan:** This course is included in the Sociology Thematic Sequence "Gender and Family Studies." The goals of the sequence are to expose students to the major sociological contributions to gender and family issues and to give students experience in connecting the substantive content of the courses. "Gender and Aging" culminates the sequence by extending theories and concepts learned in Tiers 1 and 2 into later life experiences. This course is also included in the Gerontology Thematic Sequence "Aging in Diverse Contexts." This sequence explores how social characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity, and societal factors such as economic development and cultural traditions, combine to produce a diverse range of experiences and patterns of aging. "Gender and Aging" is a Tier 3 course in the sequence, offering an in-depth exploration of gendered sources of variation in the aging experience.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

In addition to the Sociology Program Goals highlighted above, by the end of this semester students enrolled in SOC/GTY/WMS 463/563 should be able to:

analyze how gender and age are interrelated elements of social stratification (critical thinking; understanding concepts)

discuss and debate the strengths and weaknesses of the larger theoretical approach of the course (i.e. critical feminist gerontology) (critical thinking; understanding contexts)

analyze the ways in which gender socialization continues over the life course (critical thinking; understanding contexts)

compare and debate gender-based policies relevant to later life (critical thinking; reflecting and acting; engaging with other learners)

analyze the relationship between gender and aging as concepts versus facts (critical thinking; understanding contexts)

### **Readings:**

Jan 14:

"The Old Couple and their Goat". In: M. Cruikshank (ed). *Fierce with Reality*.p. 59-61

Jan. 16 A Profile of Older Americans

Sinnott JD & Shifren K. (2001). Gender and aging: gender differences and gender roles. In: J.E. Birren & K. W Schaie (eds). *Handbook of the psychology of aging* (p. 454-476). Academic Press: San Diego

Jan. 21 Martin Luther King Day – No Class

### **Biology and the Social Constructions of Age, Gender and Race**

Jan 23: Wittig M. One is not born woman.

Jan 28: Hepworth M. (1999). In defiance of an ageing culture. *Ageing and Society*. 19(1): 139-148.

Hazan H. (1994). The social trap: The language of separation. In: *Old age constructions and deconstructions*. (p. 13-27). Cambridge University Press.

### **Doing gender, doing age**

Jan 30: Risman B. (2004). Gender as a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism. *Gender & Society*. 18: 429-450.

st C & Zimmerman DH. (2002). Doing gender. In S. Fenstemaker & C West (eds.) *Doing gender, doing difference*. New York: Routledge.

Feb. 4: Silver, CB. (2003). Gendered identities in old age: Toward (de) gendering? *Journal of Aging Studies*. 17: 379-397.

Gulette. (2004). Age identity revisited. (pp. 121-139. *Aged by Culture*.

Feb. 6: Group work

### **Older Women**

Feb. 11 Take home exam one will be handed out. It is due on Monday, 2/18.

rsery rhyme. In: M. Cruikshank (ed). *Fierce with Reality*. P. 181

Gibson D. (1996). Broken down by age and gender: "The Problem of Old Women" Redefined."

B. MacDonald. Look me in the eye. (p. 25-42). Old women, aging and ageism.

Ray R. (1996). A postmodern perspective in feminist gerontology. *The Gerontologist*. 36(5): 674-680.

Feb. 13 Maierhofer R. Simone de Beauvoir and the Graying of American feminism. (2000). *Journal of Aging and Identity*. 5(2): 2000.

anski MMO. From glamour girl to social pariah. In: M. Cruikshank (ed.) *Fierce with Reality*. p. 185-198.

Feb. 18 **Exam 1 is due at midnight.**

We will be broadly discussing the exam and the readings to date.

### **Older Men**

Feb. 20 Connell RW. (2005). The history of masculinity. (pp. 185-203.

Van der Hoonad. Aging and masculinity: (2007). A topic whose time has come.

Higgs P & McGown F. Aging, embodiment and the negotiation of the third and fourth ages. In: A. Kampf, BL Marshall & A. Petersen (eds.) *Aging men, masculinities and modern medicine* (p. 21-34)

Feb 25: Calasanti T, King N. Firming the floppy penis.

Watkins ES. (2008). Medicine, masculinity and the disappearance of the male menopause. (2008).

### **Older Transgendered Individuals**

.27: Cook-Daniels L. (2006). Trans aging. In: E. Kimmel, T. Rose & S. David (eds.) *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender aging*. NY: Columbia University Press.

Butler SS. (2004). Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) elders: The challenges and resilience of this marginalized group. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*. 9(4): 25-44

## Ageism

March 4 Cruikshank M. (2003). Ageism. In: *Learning to be old*. (pp. 135-158).

Twigg J. (2007). Clothing, age and the body: a critical review. *Ageing and Society*. 27(2): 285-305.

March 6 Woodward K. (2003). Against wisdom. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 17: 55-67.

March 11 - 15 **Spring Break**

## Embodiment

March 18 Jones J & Pugh S. (2005). Aging gay men: Lessons from the sociology of embodiment. *Men and Masculinities*. 7: 248-260.

Laz C. (2003). Age embodied. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 17: 503-519.

March 20 de Beauvoir S. (1972). The discovery and assumption of old age: The body's experience. In *The Coming of Age*. NY: GP Putman and Sons.

## Aging and relationships

March 25 Hogestad GO and Call VRA. (2007). Pathways to childlessness: A life course perspective. *Journal of Family Issues*. 28(10): 1138-1361.

ham J. The married lives of older people. (pp. 87-97). In S. Arber & J. Ginn. *Connecting aging and gender: A sociological approach*.

March 27 Funk LM. (2010). prioritizing parental autonomy: Adult children's accounts of feeling responsible for supporting aging parents. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 24: 57-64.

'R. (2003). The uninvited guest: Mother/daughter conflict in feminist gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 17: 113-128.

April 1        Catching up on anything we haven't had a chance to discuss yet (no new readings due).

April 3        Group work

### Caregiving

April 8        Exam 2 will be handed out. It is due on Monday, April 15.

Women and caregiving: Facts and figures. National Center on  
Caregiving

Gerstel N & Gallagher SK. (2001). Men's caregiving: gender and the contingent character of care. *15(2): 197-217.*

April 10        Browne CV & Braun KL. (2008). Globalization, Women's Migration, and the Long Term Care work force. *The Gerontologist.* 16-24.

April 15        **Exam 2 is due at midnight.**

gg J. (2003). The Body and Bathing. In: CA Faircloth (ed.) *Aging bodies.* Alta Mira Press. (pp. 143-169).

Tronto JC. (1993). Care. In Joan C. Tronto *Moral Boundaries.* NY: Routeledge. (pp. 101-124).

### Home and Housing in Later Life

April 17        Roth E et al. (2012) Baby boomers in an active adult retirement community: Comity Interrupted. *The Gerontologist.* 52(2): 189-198.

The meaning of home for childless older women (I will distribute this)

April 22:        de Vries. (2005-2006). Home at the end of the rainbow. *Generations.* Winter. (p. 64-69).

Johnson MJ, Jackson NC, Arnette JK, Koffman SD. (2005). Gay and lesbian perceptions of retirement discrimination. *Journal of Homosexuality.* 49(2): 83-102

**Gendered work, gendered retirement**

April 24: Calasanti T. (1996). Gender and life satisfaction in retirement: An assessment of the male model. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. S18-S29.

Mock, Taylor and Savin-Williams,. (2006). Aging together: The retirement plans of same-sex couples. In: D Kimmel, T Rose S David. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Aging*. NY: Columbia University Press. (pp. 152-174).

April 29 Arber S & Ginn J. Choice and constraint in the retirement of older married women. (pp. 69-86). In S. Arber & J. Ginn. *Connecting aging and gender: A sociological approach*.

May 1 Finishing up; Last day of class. Take home exam will be handed out.

**Weekly Critical Questions**

Each week, on either Monday or Wednesday (I will let you know weekly which one you will be responsible for), you will bring a critical question to class which you will turn in at the beginning. The critical question should be a thoughtful question based on one of the readings for that day. It should go beyond the obvious (e.g., "What's up with gender and aging") and instead focus on some critical aspect of the author's argument, of a point raised by the author, of how the reading may call a different reading into question or connect with it in an interesting way, and so forth. Your questions will often be used to generate class discussion, and may even be used to form the basis of the exams. Your question should be at least one paragraph (5 sentences or more) in length and should include some context sentences which lead up to the argument. For example, a question might be something like:

*Woodward argues that wisdom is a euphemism which serves to disempower older people. She notes that by instilling some sort of "positive" label, "older people are summarily dismissed. I wonder, then, if "wisdom" can be considered a label much like gender and age and whether the act of labeling in general is a form of disempowerment. Given Woodward's argument, is it possible for a label to be empowering? What would be necessary for it to be so?*

Points will be based upon your ability to convince me that you have read the article and have thought deeply about how it can be interpreted and/or applied. They will be allocated as follows:

2=Excellent. Question shows a clear and accurate understanding of the reading. There is thoughtful engagement with the material. Question demonstrates critical insight and an ability to generate productive, scholarly discussion.

1=satisfactory. Question engages some aspect of the reading, but is not entirely accurate or on target or reflects on a superficial understanding of the material.

0=unsatisfactory or missing. Question does not accurately engage the material or show an understanding of some of the important ideas and concepts.

Please upload your questions via drop box at least 15 minutes prior to the start of class.

**Rubric for Essay Exams**

Criteria	Level of Performance	
	High Quality	Low Quality
Overall thesis/	Evidence can be assembled to address the question	Evidence may not be available due to a

addressed		poorly stated or overly obvious thesis
	Involves the relationship of aging, gender and some specific components discussed in this class and through readings.	Is overly general or does not involve the relationship between aging and gender and specific components.
Definition of factors or key terms	Provides explanations, definitions or operationalization of key terms.	Does not explain key terms or uses very generalized descriptions that do not show thoughtful engagement with or thinking about the material.
Depth of Analysis	2 or more key components are analyzed in terms of subgroups (e.g., analysis goes beyond the obvious & uses comparisons (if appropriate) or further refinement.	No subgrouping
Statement/major points	Clearly and precisely presented	Vague or confusing
Use of evidence	Evidence explicitly & clearly related to the statement	Relationship of evidence to the statement is not clear or not persuasive.
Appropriateness of evidence	Evidence is drawn from reliable, scholarly sources.	Evidence is drawn from biased sources or from unsupported opinion..
Organization	Information is well organized.	Organization is muddled at times or presents other challenges to the readers.
Flow	Maintains focus; information presented clearly and concisely. There are smooth transitions between paragraphs and key conceptual points.	Lacks focus. Strays from the topic. Transitions are not smooth.
Conclusion	Brings key concepts together in an effective summary; is thoughtful.	Conclusion is does not bring the information together effectively. The reader does not have a clear sense of tie-in of the materials. Is obvious rather than thoughtful.
Polish	Good word choice; avoids distracting grammatical errors; appropriately uses quotations.	Word choices not always accurate or effective; grammatical errors; relies too heavily on long quotations.
Citations*	APA style used to cite all sources.	Inappropriate use of citations or incorrect style.