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

Dr. Kate de Medeiros
367-E Upham Hall

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. and by appointment.
529-9648; demedekb@miamiOH.edu

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:

Jan. 16 A Profile of Older Americans


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.


**Doing gender, doing age**


Feb. 6: Group work

**Older Women**

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

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


Feb. 18 Exam 1 is due at midnight.

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

**Older Men**


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


**Older Transgendered Individuals**


**Ageism**


March 11 - 15 **Spring Break**

**Embodiment**


**Aging and relationships**


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


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


**Home and Housing in Later Life**


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


Gendered work, gendered retirement


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 of 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

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Level of Performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall thesis/</td>
<td>Evidence can be assembled to address the question</td>
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<td>Evidence may not be available due to a</td>
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https://niihka.miamioh.edu/portal/tool/a46812c8-1dea-4081-8a97-9a9ce845d6e8/printFriendly
<table>
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<tr>
<th>addressed</th>
<th>poorly stated or overly obvious thesis</th>
<th>Involves the relationship of aging, gender and some specific components discussed in this class and through readings.</th>
<th>Is overly general or does not involve the relationship between aging and gender and specific components.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Definition of factors or key terms</td>
<td>Provides explanations, definitions or operationalization of key terms.</td>
<td>Does not explain key terms or uses very generalized descriptions that do not show thoughtful engagement with or thinking about the material.</td>
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<td>Depth of Analysis</td>
<td>2 or more key components are analyzed in terms of subgroups (e.g., analysis goes beyond the obvious &amp; uses comparisons (if appropriate) or further refinement.</td>
<td>No subgrouping</td>
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<td>Statement/major points</td>
<td>Clearly and precisely presented</td>
<td>Vague or confusing</td>
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<td>Use of evidence</td>
<td>Evidence explicitly &amp; clearly related to the statement</td>
<td>Relationship of evidence to the statement is not clear or not persuasive.</td>
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<td>Appropriateness of evidence</td>
<td>Evidence is drawn from reliable, scholarly sources.</td>
<td>Evidence is drawn from biased sources or from unsupported opinion.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Information is well organized.</td>
<td>Organization is muddled at times or presents other challenges to the readers.</td>
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<td>Flow</td>
<td>Maintains focus; information presented clearly and concisely. There are smooth transitions between paragraphs and key conceptual points.</td>
<td>Lacks focus. Strays from the topic. Transitions are not smooth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Brings key concepts together in an effective summary; is thoughtful.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>Polish</td>
<td>Good word choice; avoids distracting grammatical errors; appropriately uses quotations.</td>
<td>Word choices not always accurate or effective; grammatical errors; relies too heavily on long quotations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citations*</td>
<td>APA style used to cite all sources.</td>
<td>Inappropriate use of citations or incorrect style.</td>
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