

**Social Gerontology: 920:303:01**  
Department of Sociology  
Rutgers University  
Fall 2015  
Tuesday & Thursday, 6:40 – 8:00 pm  
Beck Hall 251

**Instructor:** John Rand  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 8:15 – 9:15pm  
**Office:** Outside Lucy Stone Hall B227  
**E-mail:** [johnrand@sociology.rutgers.edu](mailto:johnrand@sociology.rutgers.edu)

This course explores the sociological aspects of aging – how do the elderly affect society and how does society affect the elderly. We examine the interaction of the elderly with society and with many of our social institutions such as religion, healthcare, government, and the economy. We look at the issues associated with our aging population and how those issues affect people of all ages. We examine several current controversies associated with our changing population structure. We might not reach a consensus on how to solve the problems but we should all leave the course with a better understanding of our society and hopefully ways in which we can improve it.

**Goals for this course:** Students will come away from this class with a deeper understanding of today's aging society, including how the changing demographics will influence public policy for years to come. Students will develop the conceptual skills to understand and analyze our aging population and be able to apply different perspectives to comprehend more fully the issues. Most importantly, students will be challenged to critically examine our changing society and develop the ability and willingness to be critical thinkers going forth.

**Readings:** There is one required book for this course.

Moody, Harry R (2011). *Aging: Concepts and Controversies*. (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). California: Pine Forge Press (ISBN-13: 978-1452203096).

In addition to the textbook, there will be a number of additional readings. These will be posted on Sakai – either as URL links or as scanned articles. In order to access many of the URL links, you will need to be able to log onto Rutgers University Library, i.e., have a username and password.

**Class Website:** The course website is on Sakai and is called **Social Gerontology Fall 15**. You should plan to check this website regularly as new readings will be added during the semester. Readings will be posted on the website under “Resources”.

**Exams:** There will be three exams and each will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. They will include material covered in class as well as the assigned readings whether or not we have had time to discuss them. Please note that make up exams will be permitted only

if you meet the appropriate university requirements. You will be given the opportunity to make up work missed if you have a valid excuse from a doctor, police officer, or the obituary for the funeral you need to attend.

**Informant & Papers:** You will need to find someone who is 65 or older whom you are comfortable talking to – this can be a grandparent, neighbor, friend, etc. This person will be an informant for you throughout the semester, and you will be asked periodically to write short papers (3 to 4 pages) based on your informant’s responses to questions/topics. More information on the papers will be provided in the first few days of class.

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is expected at each class as we will cover issues not in the readings. Participation means speaking in class in response to my questions during lecture, and contributing to discussions and group work. Note that there is no grade for attendance. If you attend every class but never contribute, you will not get points for participation. Participation points will also be granted for contributing test questions and participating in small group exercises in class. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Frequent absences and persistent lateness will count against your participation grade.

**Grading:**

Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

Exam 1	= 20%
Exam 2	= 20%
Final Exam	= 20%
Papers	= 30%
Participation	= 10%

Rutgers University uses a lettered grading system. Your final grade will be assigned in accordance with this system, shown below. You must complete all assignments and exams, and attend more than half of the classes, to get a grade; otherwise you will receive an F.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Point Range</i>
A	90-100%
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	< 60

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit may be offered in this course at the instructor’s discretion. I do not negotiate final grades.

**Courtesy:** Please come to class on time and plan to attend the entire lecture. The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, napping, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, etc. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct> .

**University Policy on Academic Integrity:** Students in this class are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. I will not tolerate cheating of any kind in my courses, and I will report the incident directly to the appropriate college officer if I believe the university's policy on academic integrity has been violated. Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism denying others access to information or material, and facility violations of academic integrity. For more details, please see the following website:  
**<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>**

**E-mail Protocol:** I don't want to delete your e-mails as "spam" so please include "**SocGer**" and your name in the subject line. If these don't show up, it is more than likely that I will delete the e-mail.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Most of the class discussions will be based upon the readings. Therefore, it is imperative that you read the assigned materials before class in order to be an informed participant during our discussions.**

- Tues. Sept 1**                    **Introduction & Course Overview**  
**Who am I? What is expected of you? What is this course about? What will you get out of taking this course? Where do you find the readings?**
- Thurs. Sept 3**                    **Life Course Perspective on Aging**  
  
**Read:** Moody – Basic Concepts I – pp. 1-26  
Who Wants to Live Forever?
- Tues. Sept 8**                    **No Class – Monday Classes**
- Thurs. Sept 10**                    **Demography**  
  
**Read:** Henig – What is it about 20-Somethings  
Rosen – Dear NY Times  
Peck - Population 2050  
Ronald Lee – The Landscape of Demographic Transition  
Global Age Watch  
Young and Old Brains
- Tues. Sept 15**                    **Religion, Spirituality and the Elderly**  
  
**Read:** Ellen Idler – Religion and Aging  
Watkins – Spiritual Postmodern  
Five Wishes
- Thurs. Sept 17**                    **No Class**
- Tues. Sept 22**                    **Does Old Age Have Meaning?**  
  
**Read:** Moody – Controversy I – pp. 27-47  
Mining the Depths of Despair
- Thurs. Sept 24**                    **Aging, Healthcare & Society**  
  
**Read:** Moody – Basic Concepts II – pp. 129-161

CDC 2013 – State of Aging and Health  
OECD 2013 Health Report  
Alzheimers Disease 2012  
Is Aging a Disease  
Questions on Medicare Savings

**Tues. Sept 29**                    **Should We Ration Healthcare for Older People?**

Read: Moody – Controversy 4 – pp. 163-192  
MetLife Caregiving Costs  
*First Informant Paper Due.*

**Thurs. Oct 1**                    **Families and the Elderly**

Read: Adam Davey – Formal & Informal Community Care<sub>2</sub>  
MetLife Caregiving Costs  
Can Technology Ease the Burden of Caring for People with Dementia  
Personal Reflection Caring for Aging Parents

**Tues. Oct 6**                    **Should Families Provide for Their Own?**

Read: Moody – Controversy 5 – pp. 195-226

**Thurs. Oct 8**                    **Should Older People be Protected from Bad Choices?**

Read: Moody – Controversy 6 – pp. 229-253

**Tues. Oct 13**                    **Exam 1**

**Thurs. Oct 15**                    **Should People Have the Choice to End Their Lives?**

Read: Moody – Controversy 7 – pp. 257-285  
Why I Hope to Die at 75

**Tues. Oct 20**                    **The Elderly and the Economy**

Read: Moody – Basic Concepts III – pp. 287-317  
Debt Hobbles Older Americans  
Long term Care Insurance

- Thurs. Oct 22**      **Should Age or Need be Basis of Entitlement?**
- Read: Moody – Controversy 8 – pp. 319-355  
*Second Informant Paper Due*
- Tues. Oct. 26**      **What is the Future of Social Security?**
- Read: Moody – Controversy 9 – pp. 357-389  
Age Old Debate  
Americans Make Hard Choices on Social Security
- Thurs. Oct. 29**      **The Elderly and Crime**
- Read: Fear of Crime (pdf)  
MetLife Elder Abuse Study
- Tues. Nov 3**      **Elderly and the Criminal Justice System**
- Read: Aging Inmates (pdf)  
Prison Inmates to lose old age benefits
- Thurs. Nov 5**      **Exam 2**
- Tues. Nov 10**      **Business and the Elderly**
- Read: TBA
- Thurs. Nov 12**      **Is Retirement Obsolete?**
- Read: Moody – Controversy 10 – pp. 391-427
- Tues. Nov 17**      **Aging Boomers – Boom or Bust**
- Read: Moody – Controversy 11 – pp. 429-446

- Thurs. Nov 19**      **Residential Environments for the Elderly**
- Read: Finding the Right Home  
That Model is Soooo Last Millennium  
MetLife Long Term Care Costs  
Aging in Place Facilitating Choice HUD USER  
As senior population grows, aging in place gains popularity  
The Importance of Neighborhood Social Cohesion
- Tues. Nov. 24**      **Open Date**  
**This session is held open for the discussion of a recent event related to aging. Depending upon how the semester is going and the topic of interest it may move to a different day.**
- Thurs. Nov. 26**      **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**
- Tues. Dec. 1**      **The Oldest Old**
- Read: Brody  
The Oldest Old Parts 1 & 2  
*Third Informant Paper Due*
- Thurs. Dec. 3**      **Volunteering and the Future of Aging**
- Read: Reinventing Aging Report
- Tues. Dec. 8**      **Where do we go from here?**
- Read: TBA
- Thurs. Dec 10**      **Final Review**
- Tues. Dec. 15**      **Final Exam**  
**8:00 – 11:00 pm**