

## SOC 6580 Sociology of Aging

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Office hours: Tue and Thu 2:30-3:30 pm

Fall 2016  
Wed 2:30-5:15 pm  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology of Aging (or Social Gerontology) is applying scientific methods to understanding how age and aging affect human behavior and populations. This course will focus on family in later life and provide an overview of the recent theoretical and empirical developments in the area. We will consider many of the substantive issues that are of concern to family researchers, including intimate relationships in later life, marriage dissolution and subsequent repartnering, spousal/partner caregiving, parent-child relationships, stepfamily, intergenerational transfers, sibling relationships, LGBT older adults, childlessness, and grandparent-grandchild relationships. Although it would be interesting to examine these topics across different cultures and societies, this course mainly focuses on U.S. families.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Class Participation.** The class will follow a seminar format, with two students leading the discussion during each class meeting. Class discussion leaders distribute a list of discussion questions via email by 5 pm Tuesday prior to Wednesday class. Student leaders are not to summarize the material as it is assumed everyone is familiar with the readings. Instead, leaders will pose thoughtful, provocative questions to engage the class in an analysis of key topics that stem from the readings. Other students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Attendance at all class meetings is expected.

**Exam.** There will be a comprehensive closed-book, closed-note exam during final exam week (December 13, Tuesday, 3:30-5:30 pm). The exam will be structured in a manner similar to prelims.

**Term Paper.** You will have the opportunity to explore a topic about aging families that is of interest to you through a term paper assignment (topic must be approved by the instructor). This term paper could be the front end of a research paper and a description of the data set and analytic sample that could be used to answer your research question(s) OR a complete research paper in which you will use an existing dataset to analyze aging families for the topic of your interest. A one page topic statement is due **September 28**. A working bibliography is due **October 26**. The final paper is due **December 7**. Students will present their papers to the class during the last two weeks of the semester.

**Grading.** Course grades will be roughly equally comprised of discussion performance (as a leader and a participant), term paper quality (including presentation), and final exam score.

**Course Readings.** The readings for this course will be available in Canvas. Be sure that you have read the assigned material prior to the class meetings.

**Codes of Academic Conduct.** Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, forgery, bribery/threats, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating academic dishonesty. Violations of academic integrity will be penalized with an F in the class and prosecution at the University level (for more detailed information, see Student Handbook).

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Week 1 (August 24) Age-Period-Cohort Effects

Glenn, Norval D. 2005. *Cohort Analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.

### Week 2 (August 31) Intimate Relationships in Later Life

Blieszner, Rosemary. 2006. "A Lifetime of Caring: Dimensions and Dynamics in Late-Life Close Relationships." *Personal Relationships* 13:1-18.

Cooney, Teresa M. and Kathleen Dunne. 2001. "Intimate Relationships in Later Life: Current Realities, Future Prospects." *Journal of Family Issues* 22(7):838-858.

Umberson, Debra, Kristi Williams, Daniel A. Powers, Meichu D. Chen, and Anna M. Campbell. 2005. "As Good as It Gets? A Life Course Perspective on Marital Quality." *Social Forces* 84(1):493-511.

Zhang, Zhenmei, Hui Liu, and Yan-Liang Yu. 2016. "Marital Biography and Health in Middle and Late Life." Pp. 199-218 in *Couple Relationships in the Middle and Later Years: Their Nature, Complexity, and Role in Health and Illness*, edited by J. Bookwala. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Zissimopoulos, Julie M., Benjamin R. Karney, and Amy J. Rauer. 2015. "Marriage and Economic Well Being at Older Age." *Review of Economic Household* 13:1-35.

### Week 3 (September 7) Marital Dissolution: Widowhood and Divorce

Brown, Susan L. and I-Fen Lin. 2012. "The Gray Divorce Revolution: Rising Divorce Among Middle-aged and Older Adults, 1990-2010." *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological and Social Sciences* 67(6):731-741.

Carr, Deborah, James S. House, Camille Wortman, Randolph Nesse, and Ronald C. Kessler. 2001. "Psychological Adjustment to Sudden and Anticipated Spousal Loss Among Older Widowed Persons." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 56B(4):S237-S248.

Ha, Jung-Hwa. 2008. "Changes in Support From Confidants, Children, and Friends Following Widowhood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70(2):306-318.

Karraker, Amelia and Kenzie Latham. 2015. "In Sickness and in Health? Physical Illness as a Risk Factor for Marital Dissolution in Later Life." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 56(1):59-73.

Sasson, Isaac and Debra J. Umberson. 2014. "Widowhood and Depression: New Light on Gender Difference, Selection, and Psychological Adjustment." *Journal of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 69(1):135-145.

### Week 4 (September 14) Repartnering after Union Dissolution: Dating, LAT, and Cohabitation

Brown, Susan L., Jennifer Roebuck Bulanda, and Gary R. Lee. 2012. "Transitions Into and Out of Cohabitation in Later Life." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(4):774-793.

de Jong Gierveld, Jenny and Eva-Maria Merz. 2013. "Parents' Partnership Decision Making After Divorce or Widowhood: The Role of (Step)Children." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(5): 1098-1113.

McWilliams, Summer and Anne E. Barrett. 2014. "Online Dating in Middle and Later Life: Gendered Expectations and Experiences." *Journal of Family Issues* 35(3):411-436.

Schimmele, Christoph M. and Zheng Wu. 2016. "Repartnering after Union Dissolution in Later Life." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78(4):1013-1031.

Watson, Wendy K. and Charlie Stelle. 2011. "Dating for Older Women: Experiences and Meaning of Dating in Later Life." *Journal of Women & Aging* 23:263-275.

### **Week 5 (September 21) Spousal/Partner Caregiving**

Ducharme, Francine, Louise Lévesque, Lise Lachance, Marcellin Gangbè, Steven H. Zarit, Jean Vézina, and Chantal D. Caron. 2007. "Older Husbands as Caregivers: Factors Associated with Health and the Intention to End Home Caregiving." *Research on Aging* 29(1):3-31.

Feld, Sheila, Ruth E. Dunkle, Tracy Schroepfer, and Huei-Wern Shen. 2006. "Expansion of Elderly Couple's IADL Caregiver Network Beyond the Marital Dyad." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 63(2):95-113.

Freedman, Vicki A., Jennifer C. Cornman, and Deborah Carr. 2014. "Is Spousal Caregiving Associated with Enhanced Well-Being? New Evidence From the Panel Study of Income Dynamics." *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 69(6):861-869.

Karlsson, Sofie Ghazanfareeon, Stina Johansson, Arne Gerdner, and Klas Borell. 2007. "Caring While Living Apart." *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 49(4):3-27.

Noël-Miller, Claire M. 2011. "Partner Caregiving in Older Cohabiting Couples." *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 66(3):341-353.

### **Week 6 (September 28) Parent-Child Relationships**

Bengtson, Vern, Roseann Giarrusso, J. Beth Mabry, and Merrill Silverstein. 2002. "Solidarity, Conflict, and Ambivalence: Complementary or Competing Perspectives on Intergenerational Relationships?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64(4):568-576.

Deane, Glenn, Glenna Spitze, Russell A. Ward, and Yue (Angela) Zhuo. 2016. "Close To You? How Parent-Child Contact Is Influenced by Family Patterns." *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 71(2):344-357.

Giarrusso, Roseann, Du Feng, and Vern L. Bengtson. 2004. "The Intergenerational-Stake Phenomenon Over 20 Years." Pp. 55-76 in *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, edited by M. Silverstein. New York: Springer.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. 2015. "Relationships Between Fathers and Adult Children: The Cumulative Effects of Divorce and Repartnering." *Journal of Family Issues* 36(6):737-759.

Pillemer, Karl, Christin L. Munsch, Thomas Fuller-Rowell, Catherine Riffin, and J. Jill Suitor. 2012. "Ambivalence Toward Adult Children: Difference Between Mothers and Fathers." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(5):1101-1113.

### **Week 7 (October 5) Stepfamily**

Ganong, Lawrence and Marilyn Coleman. 2006. "Obligations to Stepparents Acquired in Later Life: Relationship Quality and Acuity of Needs." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 61B(2):S80-S88.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. 2013. "Adult Children's Relationships with Married Parents, Divorced Parents, and Stepparents: Biology, Marriage, or Residence?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(5):1181-1193.

Noël-Miller, Claire M. 2013. "Former Stepparents' Contact With Their Stepchildren After Midlife." *Journal of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 68(3):409-419.

Schmeeckle, Maria, Roseann Giarrusso, Du Feng, and Vern L. Bengtson. 2006. "What Makes Someone Family? Adult Children's Perceptions of Current and Former Stepparents." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68(3):595-610.

Seltzer, Judith A., Jenjira J. Yahirun, and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2013. "Coresidence and Geographic Proximity of Mothers and Adult Children in Stepfamilies." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(5):1164-1180.

### **Week 8 (October 12) Intergenerational Transfer: Downward Transfer**

Clark, Shelley and Catherine Kenney. 2010. "Is the United States Experiencing a 'Matrilineal Tilt?': Gender, Family Structures and Financial Transfers to Adult Children." *Social Forces* 88(4):1753-1776.

Fingerman, Karen, Laura Miller, Kira Birditt, and Steven Zarit. 2009. "Giving to the Good and the Needy: Parental Support of Grown Children." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71(5):1220-1233.

Henretta, John C., Douglas A. Wolf, Matthew F. Van Voorhis, and Beth J. Soldo. 2012. "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequality: Parents' Contribution to Children's College Costs." *Social Science Research* 41(4):876-887.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. 2013. "How Mothers Allocate Support Among Adult Children: Evidence From a Multiactor Survey." *Journal of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 68(2):268-277.

Suitor, J. Jill, Jori Sechrist, and Karl Pillemer. 2007. "Within-Family Differences in Mothers' Support to Adult Children in Black and White Families." *Research on Aging* 29(5):410-435.

### **Week 9 (October 19) Intergenerational Transfer: Upward Transfer**

Henretta, John C., Beth J. Soldo, and Matthew F. Van Voorhis. 2011. "Why Do Families Differ? Children's Care for an Unmarried Mother." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73(2):383-395.

Leopold, Thomas, Marcel Raab, and Henriette Engelhardt. 2014. "The Transition to Parent Care: Costs, Commitments, and Caregiver Selection Among Children." *Journal of Marriage and Family*

76(2):300-318.

Pezzin, Liliana E., Robert A. Pollak, and Barbara S. Schone. 2015. "Bargaining Power, Parental Caregiving, and Intergenerational Coresidence." *Journal of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 70(6):969-980.

Silverstein, Merril, Stephen Conroy, and Daphna Gans. 2012. "Beyond Solidarity, Reciprocity, and Altruism: Moral Capital as a Unifying Concept in Intergenerational Support for Older People." *Ageing & Society* 32(7):1246-1262.

Shuey, Kim and Melissa A. Hardy. 2003. "Assistance to Aging Parents and Parents-In-Law: Does Lineage Affect Family Allocation Decision?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65(2):418-431.

### **Week 10 (October 26) Sibling Relationships**

Eriksen, Shelley and Naomi Gerstel. 2002. "A Labor of Love or Labor Itself: Care Work Among Adult Brothers and Sisters." *Journal of Family Issues* 23(7):836-856.

Ingersoll-Dayton, Berit, Margaret B. Neal, Jung-Hwa Ha, and Leslie B. Hammer. 2003. "Redressing Inequality in Parent Care Among Siblings." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65(1):201-212.

Spitze, Glenna, Russell Ward, Glenn Deane, and Yue Zhuo. 2012. "Cross-sibling Effects in Parent-adult child Exchanges of Socioemotional Support." *Research on Aging* 34(2):197-221.

Suitor, J. Jill, Megan Gilligan, Kaitlin Johnson, and Karl Pillemer. 2013. "Caregiving, Perceptions of Maternal Favoritism, and Tension Among Siblings." *The Gerontologist* 54(4):580-588.

Tolkacheva, Natalia, Marjolein Broese van Groenou, and Theo van Tilburg. 2014. "Sibling Similarities and Sharing the Care of Older Parents." *Journal of Family Issues* 35(3):312-330.

### **Week 11 (November 2) LGBT Older Adults**

Fredriksen-Goldsen, Karen I., Loree Cook-Daniels, Hyun-Jun Kim, Elena A. Erosheva, Charles A. Emlet, Charles P. Hoy-Ellis, Jayn Goldsen, and Anna Muraco. 2013. "Physical and Mental Health of Transgender Older Adults: An At-Risk and Underserved Population." *The Gerontologist* 54(3):488-500.

Kim, Hyun-Jun and Karen I. Fredriksen-Goldsen. 2016. "Living Arrangement and Loneliness Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Older Adults." *The Gerontologist* 56(3):548-558.

Manning, Wendy D. and Susan L. Brown. 2015. "Aging Cohabiting Couples and Family Policy: Different-Sex and Same-Sex Couples." *Public Policy & Aging Report* 25(3):94-97.

Reczek, Corinne and Debra Umberson. 2016. "Greedy Spouse, Needy Parent: The Marital Dynamics of Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Intergenerational Caregivers." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78(4):957-974.

Zdaniuk, Bozena and Christine Smith. 2016. "Same-Sex Relationships in Middle and Late Adulthood." Pp. 95-114 in *Couple Relationships in the Middle and Later Years: Their Nature, Complexity, and Role in Health and Illness*, edited by J. Bookwala. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

**Week 12 (November 9) Childlessness**

- Abma, Joyce C. and Gladys M. Martinez. 2006. "Childlessness Among Older Women in the United States: Trends and Profiles." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68(4):1045-1056.
- Hagestad, Gunhild and Vaughn, R. A. Call. 2007. "Pathways to Childlessness: A Life Course Perspective." *Journal of Family Issues* 28(10):1338-1361.
- Plonick, Robert D. 2009. "Childlessness and the Economic Well-being of Older Americans." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 64B(6):767-776.
- Wenger, G. Clare, Anne Scott, and Nerys Patterson. 2000. "How Important Is Parenthood? Childlessness and Support in Old Age in England." *Ageing and Society* 20:161-182.
- Zhang, Zhenmei and Mark D. Hayward. 2001. "Childlessness and the Psychological Well-Being of Older Persons." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 56B(5):S311-S320.

**Week 13 (November 16) Grandparents and Grandchildren**

- Chapman, Ashton, Marilyn Coleman, and Lawrence Ganong. 2016. "'Like My Grandparent, But Not': A Qualitative Investigation of Skip-Generation Stepgrandchild-Stepgrandparent Relationships." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78(3):634-643.
- Chen, Feinian, Christine A. Mair, Luoman Bao, and Yang Claire Yang. 2015. "Race/Ethnic Differentials in the Health Consequences of Caring for Grandchildren for Grandparents." *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 70(5):793-802.
- Drew, Linda M. and Merrill Silverstein. 2007. "Grandparents' Psychological Well-Being After Loss of Contact With Their Grandchildren." *Journal of Family Psychology* 21(3):372-379.
- Fruhauf, Christine A., Shannon E. Jarrott, and Katherine R. Allen. 2006. "Grandchildren's Perceptions of Caring for Grandparents." *Journal of Family Issues* 27(7):887-911.
- Luo, Ye, Tracey A. LaPierre, Mary Elizabeth Huges, and Linda J. Waite. 2012. "Grandparents Providing Care to Grandchildren: A Population-Based Study of Continuity and Change." *Journal of Family Issues* 33(9):1143-1167.

**Week 14 (November 23) No class, Thanksgiving****Week 15 (November 30) Paper Presentations****Week 16 (December 7) Paper Presentations**

**Final exam is scheduled on December 13 (Tuesday) from 3:30-5:30 pm.**