SOC 6580 Sociology of Aging

I-Fen Lin

217 Williams Hall

Office phone number: 419-372-8517

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

Spring 2019

217 Williams Hall
Friday 2:30-5:15 pm
302 Eppler North
ifenlin@bgsu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology of Aging is applying scientific methods to understanding the interdependence between human lives and changing social structures. This course will focus on families 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 gerontologists, including marriage in later life, marital dissolution and repartnering, parent-child relationships, intergenerational transfer, grandparent-grandchild relationships, union transition and intergenerational relationships, stepfamily, aging alone, and sibling relationships. Although it would be interesting to examine these topics across different cultures and societies, this course mainly focuses on U.S. families. At the conclusion of the semester, students are expected to be familiar with current research about aging families.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Discussion Questions and Class Participation. The weekly required readings are available on Canvas. Be sure that you have read assigned readings carefully and critically and come prepared to discuss them. The class will follow a seminar format, with two or three students leading the discussion during each class meeting. Everyone except discussion leaders must submit at least two questions on Canvas (through the "Discussions" tab) by 5 pm Thursday prior to the class. Discussion leaders will organize these questions and pose thoughtful, provocative questions to engage the class in an analysis of key concepts that stem from the readings. Other students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Attendance at all class meetings is expected.

A helpful discussion question is based on critical reflection of the readings that addresses any of the following:

- Theoretical argument strengths and weaknesses
- Conceptualization of theoretical constructs
- Data and measures
- Research designs
- Analytic strategies
- Empirical findings
- Policy implications
- Future directions

To be an effective discussion leader, I expect you to:

- Be well prepared and organized
- Use class time effectively
- Help the class comprehend key issues or concepts
- Encourage the class to connect the readings and discuss broader research questions
- Engage everyone in class

Critique Paper. You will have the opportunity to explore a topic about aging families that is of interest to you through a written critique paper (topic must be approved by the instructor). The paper will be turned in piecemeal to get feedback from the instructor with the following due dates:
February 15  A topic (no more than 1 page)
March 1    Statistics for the topic (no more than 2 pages, excluding references)
March 15   Key research questions for the topic (no more than 2 pages, excluding references)
March 29   A summary of key articles for the chosen question (no more than 5 pages, excluding references)
April 19   Critique of key articles for the chosen question (no more than 10 pages, excluding references)
April 26   Written peer review (no more than 2 pages)
May 3/10   Presentation of the revised critique paper
May 10    Final revision of the critique paper (no more than 10 pages, excluding references)

In-class Exam. There will be a comprehensive closed-book, closed-note exam during final exam week. The exam will be structured in a manner similar to prelims. Old exam questions are available on Canvas. A computer lab will be reserved and announced by the end of the semester.

Grading. Course grades will be determined by the following activities:

- Weekly discussion questions and participation 20%
- Discussion leader (twice) 20%
- Critique Paper presentation and feedback 10%
- Written peer review 10%
- Critique Paper 20%
- In-class exam 20%

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).

Writing Assistance. To clearly express your idea in writing requires constant practice. Bear in mind that the quality of a first draft is usually significantly lower than the quality of any later draft. The Learning Commons located on the first floor of the William T. Jerome Library (http://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons/writing.html) is a resource available on campus to assist your writing.

Mandatory Title IX Reporters Policy. Bowling Green State University is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form are antithetical to the university’s mission and core values, violate university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. Faculty members are considered “Mandatory Reporters” and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and relationship violence to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please visit www.bgsu.edu/TitleIX to access information about university support and resources.

COURSE OUTLINE

* indicates supplemental readings

Week 1 (February 1) Graying of America


**Week 2 (February 8) Marriage**


**Week 3 (February 15) Marital Dissolution: Widowhood and Divorce**


**Week 4 (February 22) Repartnering after Dissolution: Remarriage, Cohabitation, LAT, and Dating**


**Week 5 (March 1) Parent-Child Relationships**


**Week 6 (March 7) Intergenerational Transfer**


**Week 7 (March 15) Grandparent-Grandchild Relationships**


**Week 8 (March 22) No Class (Spring Break)**

**Week 9 (March 29) Union Transition and Intergenerational Relationships**


Following Divorce or Separation in the Middle Generation.” *Family Relations* 59(5):587-598.


**Week 10 (April 5) Stepfamily**


**Week 11 (April 12) No Class (PAA Meetings)**

**Week 12 (April 19) Aging Alone**


Week 13 (April 26) Sibling Relationships


Week 14 (May 3) Student Presentations

Week 15 (May 10) Student Presentations