

SO 377A: Special Topic - Sociology of Aging

Birmingham Southern College

Spring 2022 | MW 12:30-1:50 PM

Class Meeting Location: Harbert 225

Instructor: Dr. Yingling Liu, Ph.D., J.D.

Office: Harbert 219

Email: yliu1@bsc.edu

Office hour: Mondays and Wednesdays 8:30-10 AM or by appointment

Course Description:

Lodged as we are in time's grip, all things in our world undergo aging. This course examines two consequences of this ubiquitous process: (a) people grow older in a social context and (b) human populations themselves have an age structure, which has important implications for social institutions and individuals.

Aging is tightly connected to many of the core themes in sociology as well as several other disciplines. Throughout the semester, we will visit these (and other) themes, considering the challenges and opportunities embedded in an aging society. The approach taken in this course will also be largely informed by a broad consideration of the entire life span, better known in sociology as "the life course perspective", which posits that people are never fully separated from the impact of their origins.

COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the life trajectory of so many – young and aged. At this unique time in history, we will have the opportunity to inspect how pandemic policies impact the aging population all around the world.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Articulate key concepts and theories in sociology of aging.
2. Analyze the current issues of aging by leading class discussions.
3. Illustrate social gerontological imagination by journaling a variety of experiences.
4. Conduct an interview and apply interdisciplinary perspectives on aging to explain major struggles of older population.
5. Develop a global mindset by investigating COVID related public policies all around the world.

Required Texts

Auadagno, Jill. (2021). *Aging and the Life Course: An Introduction to Social Gerontology*. 8th edition. Mc Graw Hill. New York: NY.

- An older version of this book, like 7th edition is acceptable.
- There will be other required reading materials provided on Moodle.

Overview of Assessments

Assessments	Points
Quizzes	20
Journals	40
Interview Project	20
Discussion Lead	20
Total	100

1. Quizzes (20%)

You will take 12 quizzes on Moodle. Each quiz will be available and taken at the beginning of each class meeting when we start a new topic. Each quiz will contain 4-5 multiple choices questions and you have 5 minutes to finish each quiz. Each time, your instructor will orally give you a code to open the quiz. Keep in mind that you have to be in class on time to be able to receive the code and take the quiz. There is no make-up or late submission for the quizzes. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester, which means that only ten of your highest quiz grades will be counted toward your final grade. Each quiz worth 2 points and you can earn the maximum of 20 points. No late work or make up will be accepted for quizzes.

2. Journals (40%)

You will complete 4 journal entries for the semester (see the list below). You will complete / choose from the list and respond to the questions in the respective guidelines. A journal completed will include minimal grammatical errors and include good sociological insight into the topic. Each completed journal worth 10 points and you can earn the maximum of 40 points for this assignment. More details of this assignment, including a grading rubric will be provided separately on Moodle.

List of Journals

- (1) When I am 75 Prompt & Image
- (2) 99% Invisible and Aging
- (3) COVID related policies around the world
- (4) Watch one of the movies below and write a reflection paper
 - Black Mirror – San Junipero*
 - Departures*
 - Pushing Hands*
 - The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*
 - The Intern*

3. Interview Project (20%)

You will interview with a senior citizen who is 65 years old or older and write a reflection paper on your interactions with this person. This person should be someone who are NOT related to you. You will conduct an interview (approximately 30 minutes) with this person and submit a reflection paper. Due to pandemic, please conduct the interview online or over the

phone. You can earn the maximum of 20 points for this assignment. More details of this assignment including a grading rubric will be provided separately on Moodle.

4. Discussion Lead* (20%)**

You will sign up for being the discussion lead for 2 topics this semester. As a discussion lead, you will pick ONE piece of scholarly material outside of the textbook (per topic) to share with the class. This piece of reading material (approximately 20 pages in length) can be a journal article, a chapter of a published book, an academic podcast, etc. that related to the topic. You will post this reading piece and discussion questions on Moodle no later than 11:59PM on the Friday prior to the Monday of the topic. Then, you will lead the in-class discussion on this piece on the Wednesday of topic week you sign-up to. Each discussion you lead worth 10 points and you can earn the maximum of 20 points. The sign-up will take place in the first day of class.

*** Alternatively, if you wish to make this course more research product-oriented, you can choose to write a literature review (minimum 800 words) in lieu of the discussion lead assessment. You MUST consult with me and get my approval. The literature review will be graded on a 20 points scale and due on the last day of class (May 9th). More details of the literature review will be provided separately as needed.

Grading Scales

The grade scale is listed below. Rounding (for example, an 89.67% is viewed as a 90% or an A) has already been built into the grading scale. **Keep in mind that class participation and attendance may figure decisively in your final grade.** Thus, plan to be in class on time and participate actively. No extra credit will be offered at the end of the semester. Considerable grace has been built into the syllabus and course design, so do not plan on grade changes at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your grade in the course, address it with me early in the semester and there will be a much better chance of you getting a good grade than if you wait until later on.

As a reminder, I do not give grades, you earn them.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Competent	C	73-77%
	A-	90-92%		C-	70-72%
	B+	88-89%		D+	68-69%
Superior	B	83-87%	Marginal	D	63-67%
	B-	80-82%		D-	60-62%
	C+	78-79%		F	0-59%

Course Policies & Procedures

Face Masks

In order to create the healthiest environment possible, BSC students and instructors MUST wear face masks (surgical grade masks or N95 masks) over their mouths and noses while in class sessions. Please note that a cloth mask is NOT SUFFICIENT. Refusals to abide by these policies may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity

BSC Honor Code “As a member of the student body of Birmingham-Southern College, I realize my responsibility to the traditions of the institutions, to my fellow students and to myself, I recognize the significance of the Honor System, and I pledge that I will not lie, cheat, or steal as a member of the Birmingham-Southern College community.”

Any misconduct, unethical behavior, or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, lying, stealing, plagiarism, harassment, and the creation of an unsafe or threatening learning environment. The student must document all sources of information, including computer usage. Credit must be given when using the ideas of others using **ASA citation style**. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure work is original in nature and when unsure how to properly cite outside work, should contact the professor ASAP. All assignments in this course should be completed **independently** unless otherwise specified. Any suspected violation of the BSC Honor Code will be taken seriously and immediately reported.

Turn-It-In Assignment

Journals and the interview project paper will be submitted to Turn-It-In to test for originality. Based on the BSC Honor Code stated above, plagiarism will be reported, and the corresponding assignment will receive 0.

Late Work

All assignments (excluding discussions) are due at 11:59pm on the respective due dates. Late is defined as not submitted to Moodle by the due date and time. The due dates are listed on the course calendar as well as posted to Moodle. All assignments submitted late within 24 hours after the due date will receive 10% penalty. Assignments submitted after the 24 hours of the due date will receive a 0. Late work is not accepted with rare exceptions***.

***You may make up discussions or submit late work with no penalty ONLY under the following circumstances:

- (1) You are isolating and experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms (proper documentation required),
- (2) You are having a medical emergency or have been directed by a physician not to attend class due to illness (medical documentation required),
- (3) You have a documented family emergency, or
- (4) You are absent due to a college sponsored event (proper documentation required).

Communication

I like talking to people and I love students! That means I always welcome students to interact with me. Email is the best way to reach me. And, please take advantage of my office hours or make an appointment.

I may have limited availability on nights and weekends. I do appreciate you writing a clear subject in every email you send to me. Please always start your subject with "SO 377 sociology of aging" followed by a short phrase of your questions. For example, if you are asking a question about quiz 1, please write your email subject like this: "SO 377- question about quiz 1". Doing so will expedite my response to you. For me, an email without a clear subject signals nonimportant and nonurgent.

Remember, if you have concerns about this class, let me know as soon as possible. If you don't let me know your concern, that concern may never exist to me. Contact me sooner rather than later. Emailing me about your concern of quiz 1 at the end of the semester is not going to help you at all.

Counseling Services

BSC Counseling Services offers students of all backgrounds, races, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, ethnicities, and cultures a safe place to discuss and resolve issues that interfere with personal and academic goals. The Counseling Services office recognizes and honors the complex intersectionality of all aspects of a person's identity and presenting concerns. All enrolled BSC students are eligible for counseling at no cost. Students can schedule an appointment by calling 205-226-4717, or in-person on the second floor of Norton Campus Center in the Counseling & Health Services suite next to Student Development. Visit the Counseling & Health Services website for more information.

Accommodations

If you have a documented disability and need academic accommodations in this course, please speak with me privately as soon as possible so I can be prepared to meet your needs. All disabilities must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Services which will provide an academic accommodations letter to me outlining your needs. If you have not already registered with the Office of Accessibility Services, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services at BSC as soon as possible: (205) 226-7909 or Norton 228 or smfoster@bsc.edu or accessibility@bsc.edu.

Title IX

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported, or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct. See the BSC Title

IX website (www.bsc.edu/titleix) for more information, including an online report form. If you or a peer have experienced such misconduct, there are faculty and staff members who are trained in supporting students by answering questions and helping them navigate this process. The list of advocates can be found along with other helpful resources on the Title IX website.

Safe Spaces and Trigger Warnings

This class is a safe space for you to hold and share opinions and analyses without fear of discrimination. However, this is not a safe space for anyone to be shielded from controversial opinions. The heart of sociology is grappling with difficult ideas, opinions and realities. The current body of sociological research is a compilation of the thoughts of an ideologically diverse group of men and women writing over the course of several generations. Some of them wrote quite conventionally, while others had ideas that some of us might find shocking. As sociologists, we are tasked with understanding why people believe and behave as they do. Sometimes this involves understanding their worldviews, which could make us uncomfortable. Finally, as we engage and analyze the real world, we often find that reality is not always politically correct. When we are confronted with ugly realities and worldviews that offend us, we best conquer them when we understand them, not when we hide from them.

International Students

If you identify yourself as an international student, I want to give you a special welcome to be in my class! Was an international student myself before being a professor, I understand the difficulties of being in a new place that is far away from family, friends and familiarities. I am happy to be a resource to you and provide any help I can to make your life easier at BSC.

First Generation College Students

A first-generation college student is a student whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. I am the first in my family to graduate with a four-year bachelor's degree (and a law degree, a master's degree, and a doctoral degree). I understand the struggles and challenges a first-generation college student has. Please don't hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can help with.

Course Calendar

The following is a tentative schedule of the topics that will be covered this semester. This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated orally in class and in writing on Moodle.

*** the schedule of discussion lead will be added and posted once the sign-up is completed, approximately on the second week of class.

Dates:	Day	Topic to be Covered	Assignment Due
Feb 2	W	Introduction and Syllabus	Discussion lead sign-up
7 9	M W	Chapter 1	Ch1 quiz
14 16	M W	Chapter 2	Ch2 quiz
21 23	M W	Chapter 3	Ch3 quiz Journal #1
28 Mar 2	M W	Chapter 4	Ch4 quiz
7 9	M W	Chapter 6&7	Ch6&7 quiz
14 16	M W	Chapter 8	Ch8 quiz Journal #2
21 23	M W	Spring Break!!! No classes!	
28 30	M W	Chapter 10	Ch10 quiz
Apr 4 6	M W	Chapter 11	Ch11 quiz
11 13	M W	Chapter 12	Ch12 quiz Journal #3
18 20	M W	Chapter 13	Ch13 quiz
25 27	M W	Chapter 15	Ch15 quiz
May 2 4	M W	Chapter 16	Ch 16 quiz Journal #4
9	M	Conclusion: COVID and Aging	***literature review (optional)
12	Final Day	9-noon	Interview Project