

**Northeastern State University**  
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Department of Political Science and Sociology  
Tahlequah, OK

**INSTRUCTOR:**

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Office Hours: M W F 10:00 - 12:00 a.m.; TTH - 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. and by appointment at other times.  
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**Course Title And Number:**

**Class Days & Time:**

Soc 3813 - Sociology of Aging

1:00 -1:50 p.m. MWF (SH 207)

**PREREQUISITES:**

NONE

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:**

A comprehensive study of aging in society, including discussions of biology, psychology, and economics as related to the perspective of sociology, with emphasis on the major gerontological theories and research.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** (Required textbook)

The Realities of Aging, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2001), by Cary Kart and Jennifer Kinney

**COURSE PURPOSE:**

This course will provide an overview of the fundamental principles, theories, issues and concepts in the field of social gerontology. We will consider various dimensions of and processes of aging from several perspectives, including, but not limited to, the aging individual, the social context of aging from cross-cultural perspective, and societal responses to an aging population.

## **Why Take This Course?**

We are living in an aging society and an aging world. We are already beginning to face the challenges of our “graying” population. Over the next few decades, the social, political, and economic challenges surrounding employment, retirement, income security, health care, and long-term care of an increasing older population will occupy a central position in our national life. Because each of us has a personal stake in how our society (and our world) evolves in its treatment of aging people, we need to be informed about these issues.

On a more personal level, each of us is an aging individual. We all aspire to long life. In order to prepare ourselves for our future, we need to be able to separate the myths about the effects of aging from realities. We need to know how aging will affect us physically, psychologically and socially.

As each of us is part of a family which may include two or three generations of middle- aged and older people, our knowledge about individual aging can be used to understand better our parents, grandparents, and great-grand parents.

To understand aging, we must assemble facts and explanations from a wide array of fields. Social gerontology integrates knowledge from history, demography, biology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, geography, political science, economics, social work, medicine, nursing, law, social policy, among others. Because gerontology integrates knowledge from such disparate fields on a single subject, we see how each of these fields makes important contributions to the whole understanding of aging.

## **EXPECTED COURSE OUTCOMES:**

In terms of **substantive learning**, students completing this course will :

1. have basic knowledge of the history of aging in the US;
2. be familiar with contemporary policy issues and debates about aging;
3. understand that there exist many patterns of aging, and the ways in which gender, race, social class, and/or ethnicity affect the experience of aging;
4. Understand how social science data are collected, analyzed and presented;
5. be familiar with general concepts and theoretical frameworks used in research and practice in the field of aging;
6. Gain cross-cultural perspective of aging.

In terms of **skills**, this course will emphasize:

1. **CRITICAL THINKING** which includes **INTEGRATING AND ANALYZING** information from many different fields or disciplines and sources to formulate ideas; and clear oral

- and written expression of ideas;
2. **UNDERSTANDING CONTEXTS**, or the ways in which political, cultural, economic, and demographic factors affects our thinking about aging;
  3. **ENGAGING WITH OTHER LEARNERS** through active listening and sharing ideas with classmates;
  4. **REFLECTING AND ACTING** Drawing on the knowledge and skills described above, students completing this course should be better prepared for active and responsible involvement in meeting the needs of our aging population.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:**

The class format will consist of lectures, group discussions, class presentations/in-class writing assignments and video shows.

### **STUDENT PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES: (Attendance/Punctuality)**

Active class participation is an integral part of this course. In order to enhance your ability to participate in class, you should read all assigned materials/chapters prior to coming to class. Also, you must attend class regularly. Makeup exams or other assignments will be allowed only for university excused absences and in the case of some extreme extenuating circumstances such as illness and death in the family for which you have to provide verification.

Students who **walk out of class** while class is in session and without instructor's permission will be penalized 5 points to be deducted from their test scores every time they walk out of class.

### **ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date indicated when the assignment is given. Over due assignments will be downgraded by 25% every day they are past due.

### **STUDENT EVALUATION:**

In this course, you will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

**Exams** - There will be three exams including the final. The exams will consist of multiple-choice, identification, matching and short-essay questions. Each exam will be worth 100 points (a total of 300 points).

**Writing Assignments**- There will be one writing assignment worth 20 points. Detailed instructions on written assignments will be given later in the semester.

### **Grading Scale**

The three exams and the writing assignment will account for a total of 320 points. Final grades will be computed on total points accumulated throughout the semester. Grades will NOT be curved. Your scores will convert into letter grades as follows:

90 - 100 (288 - 320) = A

80 - 89 (256 - 287) = B

70 - 79 (224 - 255) = C

60 - 69 (192 - 223) = D

59 and lower (191 and lower) = F

**Dropping a Course with a “W”** - Students are advised that the last date during the semester when they may drop a course with an automatic “W” will be **Friday, April 8, 2005**.

### **ADA COMPLIANCE:**

If any member of the class feels that he/she has a disability and needs special accommodations of any nature whatsoever, the instructor will work with you and the University’s Office of Student Affairs to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in this class. Please advise the instructor of any such disability and the desired accommodations at the first class attended.

<b>Tentative Class Schedule (subject to change)</b>		
<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Reading</u></b>
<b>Week 1 ( Jan. 10-14)</b>	<b>The Myths of Aging</b>	<b>CH 1</b>
<b>Week 2 ( 17-21)</b>	<b>The Study of Aging</b>	<b>CH 2</b>
<b>Week 3 (24-28)</b>	<b>The Demography of Aging</b>	<b>CH 3</b>
<b>Week 4 (31-4)</b>	<b>Biomedical Aspects of Aging</b>	<b>CH 4</b>
<b>Week 5 (7-11)</b>	<b>Why Do People Become Old</b>	<b>CH 5</b>

<b>Week 6 (13-18)</b>	<b>Health Status of the Elderly</b>	<b>CH 6</b>
<b>Friday, Feb. 18</b>	<b><u>Exam One</u></b>	
<b>Week 7 (21-25)</b>	<b>Psychological Aspects of Aging</b>	<b>CH 7</b>
<b>Week 8 (28-4)</b>	<b>Social Aspects of Aging</b>	<b>CH 8</b>
<b>Week 9 (7-11)</b>	<b>Sociological Theories of Aging</b>	<b>CH 9</b>
<b>Week 10 (14 - 18)</b>	<b><u>Spring Break - No Classes</u></b>	
<b>Week 11 (21-25)</b>	<b>Aging and Family Life</b>	<b>CH 10</b>
<b>Week 12 (28 -1)</b>	<b>The Economics of Aging</b>	<b>CH 11</b>
<b>Monday, April 1</b>	<b><u>Exam Two</u></b>	
<b>Week 13 (4 - 8)</b>	<b>Work, Retirement and Leisure</b>	<b>CH 12</b>
<b>Week 14 (11 - 15)</b>	<b>The Politics of Aging</b>	<b>CH 13</b>
<b>Week 15 (18 - 22)</b>	<b>Racial and Ethnic Aging/Long term Care</b>	<b>Chs 15/17</b>
<b>Week 16 (25 - 29)</b>	<b>Health Policy and Aging/Death and Dying</b>	<b>CHs 18/19</b>

**Final Exam: Wednesday, May 4, 2005 (1:00 p.m.)**