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**KIN 500(F): AGING, HEALTH, AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:  
SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

**Class Location:** Room 20, War Memorial Gym  
**Class Times:** Fridays, 10am to 1pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Laura Hurd Clarke  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is to examine the socio-cultural research and theorizing pertaining to aging, health, and physical activity. In particular, this course considers how older adults' embodied experiences of health and physical activity are influenced by their social position as well as existing cultural norms and ideals. Thus, we discuss the role of age, ability, culture, gender, racialization, sexuality, and social class on older adults' everyday experiences of health and physical activity. We additionally explore how health and physical activity in later life are shaped and constrained by ableism, ageism, healthism, heterosexism, and successful aging narratives. Specific topics related to health and physical activity in later life that we investigate include body image, chronic illness, consumer culture, disability, elite sport, exercise, leisure activities, media representations, technology, and the built environment.

**Course Objectives**

The goals of this course are: (1) to critically examine and acquire knowledge of the socio-cultural research and theorizing related to aging, health, and physical activity; (2) to foster the development of advanced skills in reading, writing, facilitating discussions, and giving presentations; (3) to give students opportunities to read and reflect in depth on topics of individual interest related to aging, health, and physical activity.

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**CLASS FORMAT**

The course will be held on **Fridays from 10am to 1pm**. This graduate seminar course is intended to be a collaborative effort in which active participation is essential. The class will begin with brief opening remarks from the instructor about the week's topic and underlying theoretical concepts and related debates. During the second part of the class, a member of the class will facilitate a discussion of that week's required readings. The last two weeks of class will be structured around student presentations of their (in-progress) research papers.

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**COURSE READINGS**

The weekly readings will be a combination of research articles and book chapters which can be accessed through the UBC library reserve system – follow the links on the Connect webpage for the course. The reading materials can also be obtained directly through the UBC library.

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## **EVALUATION**

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Participation	10%
Seminar Facilitation	20%
Research Presentation	30%
Research Paper	40%

### **Participation**

Your participation mark will be based on the contributions you make in class each week. Specifically, you will be expected to come to class having read the readings and prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue. As such, you will be expected to bring to class one question per article (in typed format which will be submitted to the instructor at the end of class). These questions could be something that was left unanswered for you by each of the articles, a thought-provoking query regarding the arguments made by the authors, or a short (one or two sentence) excerpt from the reading followed by the posing of a question. Additionally, students will be required to provide feedback to the instructor on their peers' research presentations during the last two weeks of class. Finally, at the end of the term, you will be asked to evaluate your own participation and justify a proposed grade.

### **Seminar Facilitation**

Each student will individually facilitate one seminar. First, you will be expected to briefly summarize the main issues or findings of the required readings for your facilitation week. Secondly, you will lead the class in a discussion of the readings based on a series of questions that you will prepare in advance of the class. Ultimately, your job as a facilitator is to help move the class towards better understanding of the material covered in the readings and to foster active participation. Further details about this assignment will follow.

### **Research Presentation**

During the last two weeks of the course, each student will present their in-progress research papers (described below). More details to follow.

### **Research Paper**

You will be required to write a critical review of the existing literature related to a particular aspect of the sociology of the body in later life of your own choosing. Further details about this assignment will follow.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

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### **Attendance/Missed Classes**

Regular class attendance is required and students are expected to come to class having read the weekly readings and prepared to discuss them in-depth. Students who miss class due to medical or serious family emergency on the day they were scheduled to facilitate a seminar or deliver a presentation must contact the instructor as soon as possible to reschedule for an alternative time.

### **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

The University's goal is to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, including students with a disability, in accordance with their distinct needs and in a manner consistent with academic principles. Students with a disability who wish to have an academic accommodation

should contact Access and Diversity without delay.

### **Academic Integrity**

All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the University of British Columbia's Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policies, as well as the Student Declaration and the consequences of violating these policies.

### **Extensions**

Extensions for the research paper will only be granted in cases of medical or serious family emergencies. Students must contact the instructor prior to the due date of the paper in order to obtain an extension.

### **Late Papers**

Late research papers will be accepted with a penalty of two marks per day (including weekends) out of the total 40 marks for the assignment, with each day ending at 4pm. Students should hand in late assignments to the School of Kinesiology main office in War Memorial Gym (Room 210), which is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

## **WEEKLY TOPICS**

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### **Week#1 – Introduction**

**Summary:** This week will be a general overview of the course. We will discuss the structure of the course, begin to organize the seminar facilitation schedule, and go over evaluation procedures. The instructor will introduce the topic of aging, health, and physical activity through a discussion of historical influences, demographic shifts, and changing cultural norms.

### **Week#2 – The Aging Body in Socio-Cultural Context**

**Summary:** This week we will begin to examine the ways that the aging body has been theorized in the socio-cultural literature, drawing upon age relations theory, the concepts of Third and Fourth Age, and physical cultural studies.

#### Required Readings:

Calasanti, T. M., & Slevin, K. F. (2001). Chapter three: Bodies in old age. In *Gender, social inequalities and aging* (pp. 51-71). New York: Altamira.

Higgs, P., & McGowan, F. (2013). Aging, embodiment and the negotiation of the Third and Fourth Ages. In A. Kampf, B. L. Marshall, & A. Petersen (Eds.), *Aging men, masculinities and modern medicine* (pp. 21-34). New York: Routledge.

Phoenix, C. (2017). Ageing bodies. In Silk, M., Andrews, D. L., & Thorpe, H. (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of physical cultural studies* (pp. 225-234). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Reading:

Funk, L. (2016). *Sociological perspectives on aging*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford.

Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of ageing: Self, citizen and the body*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Pickard, S. (2016). *Age studies: A sociological examination of how we age and are aged through the life course*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Twigg, J. (2004). The body, gender and age: Feminist insights in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18 (1), 59–73.

**Week#3 – The Ideal Aging Body: Cultural Representations**

**Summary:** This week we will explore how aging as well as later life health and physical activity are constructed and portrayed in the media. In doing so, we will begin to explore the age, gender, and health norms and ideals that underpin older adults' experiences of growing older.

Required Readings:

Gewirtz-Meydan, A. & Ayalon, L. (2017). Forever young: Visual representations of gender and age in online dating sites for older adults. *Journal of Women and Aging*. Published online June 13, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2017.1330586>

Hurd Clarke, L., Bennett, E. V., & Liu, C. (2014). Aging and masculinity: Portrayals in men's magazines. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 31(4), 26-33.

Oghene, O.P., McGannon, K.R., Schinke, R.J., Watson, S., & Quartiroli, A. (2015). Understanding the meanings created around the aging body and sports through media representations of elite master's athletes. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 7(5), 739-758.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Reading:

Brooks, M. E., Bichard, S., & Craig, C. (2016). What's the score?: A content analysis of mature adults in super bowl commercials. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 27(4), 347-366.

Ylanne, V. (2015). Representations of ageing in the media. In J. Twigg and W. Martin (Eds). *Routledge international handbook of cultural gerontology* (pp. 369-376). New York: Routledge.

#### **Week#4 – Aging, Health, Physical Activity: The Influence of Consumer Culture**

**Summary:** This week we will discuss the role of consumer culture in the social construction and experience of health and physical activity in later life.

##### Required Readings:

Higgs, P., & Gilieard, C. (2015). Fitness and consumerism in later life. In E. Tulle and C. Phoenix (Eds.), *Physical activity and sport in later life: Critical perspectives* (pp. 32-42). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Higgs P., Leontowitsch M., Stevenson F., & Jones, I. R. (2009). Not just old and sick - the 'will to health' in later life. *Ageing and Society*, 29(5), 687-707.

Ojala, H., Calasanti, T., King, N., & Pietila, I. (2016). Natural(ly) men: Masculinity and gendered anti-ageing practices in Finland and the USA. *Ageing and Society*, 36(2), 356-375.

##### Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Hurd Clarke, L., & Bennett, E.V. (2013). Constructing the moral body: Self-care among older adults with multiple chronic conditions. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 17(3), 211-228.

Pietila, I., Ojala, H., King, N., & Calasanti, T. (2013). Aging male bodies, health and the reproduction of age relations. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 27(3), 243-251.

Rudman, D. L. (2015). Embodying positive aging and neoliberal rationality: Talking about the aging body within narratives of retirement. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 34(August), 10-20.

Slevin, K. F. (2010). 'If I had lots of money...I'd have a body makeover': Managing the aging body. *Social Forces*, 88(3), 1003-1020.

#### **Week#5 – Aging and Body Image in Later life**

**Summary:** This week we will begin to explore the complex relationships between body image, gender, health, and physical activity in later life.

##### Required Readings:

Bennett, E. V., Hurd Clarke, L., Kowalski, K. C., & Crocker, P. R. E. (2017). 'I'll do anything to maintain my health': How women perceive, experience, and cope with their aging bodies. *Body Image*, 21, 71-80.

Hurd Clarke, L. (2010). Chapter three: Embodied appearance in later life: What older women have to say. In *Facing age: Women growing older in anti-aging culture* (pp. 37-67). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Thompson, Jr., E.H., & Langendoerfer, K.B. (2016). Older men's blueprint for 'being a man'. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(2), 119-147.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Calasanti, T. (2005). Ageism, gravity, and gender: Experiences of aging bodies. *Generations*, 29(3), 8-12.

Dumas, A., Laberge, S., & Straka, S. M. (2005). Older women's relations to bodily appearance: The embodiment of social and biological conditions of existence. *Ageing and Society*, 25(6), 883-902.

Elfving-Hwang, J. (2016). Old, down and out? Appearance, body work and positive ageing among elderly South Korean women. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 38 (August), 6-15.

Slevin, K. F. (2006). The embodied experiences of old lesbians. In T. M. Calasanti and K. F. Slevin (Eds.), *Age matters: Realigning feminist thinking* (pp. 247-268). New York: Routledge.

Ward, R., & Holland, C. (2011). 'If I look old, I will be treated old': Hair and later-life image dilemmas. *Ageing and Society*, 31(2), 288-307.

**Week#6 – Chronic Illness, Pain, and Physical Activity in Later Life**

**Summary:** This week we will consider the concepts of biographical disruption and biographical flow as we explore the experience of poor health, pain, and loss of mobility in later life.

Required Readings:

Bury, M. (1982). Chronic illness as biographical disruption. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 4(2), 167-182.

Hurd Clarke, L., & Bennett, E. (2013). 'You learn to live with all the things that are wrong with you': Gender and the experience of multiple chronic conditions in later life. *Ageing and Society*, 33(2), 342-360.

Warmoth, K., Lang, I. A., Phoenix, C., Abraham, C. (2016). 'Thinking you're old and frail': A qualitative study of frailty in older adults. *Ageing and Society*, 36(7), 1483-1500.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Grenier, A., & Hanley, J. (2007). Older women and 'frailty': Aged, gendered and embodied resistance. *Current Sociology*, 55(2), 211-228.

Pickard, S. (2014). Frail bodies: Geriatric medicine and the constitution of the fourth age. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 36(4), 549-563.

Sanders, C., Donovan, J., & Dieppe, P. (2002). The significance and consequences of having painful and disabled joints in older age: Co-existing accounts of normal and disrupted biographies. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 24(2), 227-253.

## **Week#7 – Sport and Successful Aging**

**Summary:** This week we will consider the research and theorizing around older adults' engagement in competitive sports, paying particular attention to the influence of successful aging narratives.

### Required Readings:

Dionigi, R. A., Horton, S., & Baker, J. (2013). How do older masters athletes account for their performance preservation? A qualitative analysis. *Ageing and Society*, 33(2), 297-319.

Gard, M., Dionigi, R. A., Horton, S., Baker, J., Weir, P., & Dionigi, C. (2017). The normalization of sport for older people? *Annals of Leisure Research*, 20(3), 253-272.

Tulle, E. (2015). Physical activity and sedentary behaviour: A vital politics of old age? In E. Tulle and C. Phoenix (Eds.), *Physical activity and sport in later life: Critical perspectives* (pp. 9-21). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

### Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Dionigi, R. (2016). The competitive older athlete: A review of psychosocial and sociological issues. *Topics in Geriatric Rehabilitation*, 32(1), 55-62.

Katz, S. & Calasanti, T. (2015). Critical perspectives on successful aging: Does it 'appeal more than it illuminates'? *The Gerontologist*, 55(1), 26-33.

Pike, E.C.J. (2011). Aquatic antiques: Swimming off this mortal coil? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(4), 492-510.

## **Week#8 – Exercise and Physical Activity in Later Life**

**Summary:** This week we will discuss how older adults experience and perceive exercise and physical activity.

### Required Readings:

Evans, A.B., & Sleaf, M. (2012). 'You feel like people are looking at you and laughing': Older adults' perceptions of aquatic physical activity. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26(4), 515-526.

Grant, B. (2012). 'Against the grain': Over 75 years and joining a community exercise programme. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 4(1), 1-14.

Liechty, T., West, S., Naar, J., & Son, J. (2017). Perceptions of ageing among older women softball players. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 20(3), 295-313.

### Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Coupland, J. (2013). Dance, ageing and the mirror: Negotiating watchability. *Discourse and Communication*, 7(1), 3-24.

Humberstone, B., & Cutler-Riddick, B. (2015). Older women, embodiment, and yoga practice. *Ageing and Society*, 35(6), 1221-1441.

Sims-Gould, J., Hurd Clarke, L., Ashe, M. E, Naslund, J., and Liu-Ambrose, T. (2010). Renewal, strength and commitment to self and others: Older women's reflections of the benefits of exercise using photovoice. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 2(2), 250-266.

### **Week#9 – Social Activity/Inactivity and Health in Later Life**

**Summary:** This week we will consider the cultural meanings attributed to activity more generally, as we focus on the socio-cultural theorizing and research concerning ageism, social engagement, health and well-being.

#### Required Readings:

Boudiny, K. (2013). 'Active ageing': From empty rhetoric to effective policy tool. *Ageing and Society*, 33(6), 1077-1098.

Hurd, L. (1999). "We're not old!": Older women's negotiation of aging and oldness. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 13(4), 419-439.

Katz, S. (2000). Busy bodies: Activity, aging and the management of everyday life. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 14(2), 135-152.

#### Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Genoe, R. M. (2010). Leisure as resistance within the context of dementia. *Leisure Studies*, 29(3), 303-320.

Yarnal, C., Son, J., & Liechty, T. (2010). "She was buried in her purple dress and her red hat and all of our members wore full 'Red Hat Regalia' to celebrate her life": Dress, embodiment and older women's leisure: Reconfiguring the ageing process. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 25(1), 52-61.

### **Week#10 – Social Exclusion, Health, and Physical Activity**

**Summary:** This week we will discuss how social marginalization delimits some older adults' health and physical activity participation, paying particular attention to socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and racialization.

#### Required Readings:

Coloma, R. S., & Pino, F. L. (2016). 'There's hardly anything left': Poverty and the economic insecurity of elderly Filipinos in Toronto. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 48(2), 71-97.

Ferrer, I., Grenier, A., Brotman, S., & Koehn, S. (2017). Understanding the experiences of racialized older people through an intersectional life course perspective. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 41, 10-17.

Seelman, K. L., Lewinson, T., Engleman, L., Maley, O. R., & Allen, A. (2017). Coping strategies used by LGB older adults in facing or anticipating health challenges: A narrative analysis. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, Published online April 2017. doi: 10.1080/10538720.2017.1310644

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Reading:

Westwood, S. & Price, E. (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\* individuals living with dementia: Concepts, practice and rights*. New York: Routledge.

**Week#11 – Disability, Technology and the Moving/Immobile Older Body**

**Summary:** This week we will examine the relationships between technology, health, mobility, and the built environment in later life.

Required Readings:

Korotchenko, A., & Hurd Clarke, L. (2014). Power mobility and the built environment: The experiences of older Canadians. *Disability and Society*, 29(3), 431-443.

Mortenson, W. B., Sixsmith, A., & Beringer, R. (2016). No place like home? Surveillance and what home means in old age. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 35(1), 103-114.

Porter, E.J., Benson, J.J., & Matsuda, S. (2011). Older homebound women: Negotiating reliance on a cane or walker. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(4), 534-548.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Chaudhury, H., Mahmood, A., Michael, Y. L., Campo, M., & Hay, K. (2012). The influence of neighborhood residential density, physical and social environments on older adults' physical activity: An exploratory study in two metropolitan areas. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26(1), 35-43.

McCreadie, C., & Tinker, A. (2005). The acceptability of assistive technology to older people. *Ageing and Society*, 25(1), 91-110.

Mortenson, W. B., Oliffe, J. L., Miller, W. C., & Backman, C. L. (2012). Grey spaces: The wheeled fields of residential care. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 34(3), 315-329.

Papadimitriou, C. (2008). Becoming en-wheeled: The situated accomplishment of re-embodiment as a wheelchair user after spinal cord injury. *Disability and Society*, 23(7), 691-704.

**Week#12 → Student Presentations**

**Week#13 → Student Presentations**