THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
School of Kinesiology  
KIN 500(F) Aging, Health, and Physical Activity: Socio-cultural Perspectives

INSTRUCTOR  
Laura Hurd Clarke  
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Office hours: By appointment

CLASS TIMES:  Fridays, 10am to 1pm

LOCATION:  War Memorial Gym, Room 20

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. Theoretical frameworks that we explore include age relations theory, symbolic interactionism, life course perspective, postmodernism, and critical gerontology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
The goals of this course are: (1) to critically examine 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.

CLASS STRUCTURE:  
This seminar course is intended to be a collaborative effort in which active participation is essential. The class will begin with 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.
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.

EVALUATION:

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Seminar Facilitation</td>
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<td>Research Presentation</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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*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.
WEEKLY TOPICS – SUMMARY

Week#1 – Introduction
General overview of the course

Week#2 – Aging, Health, and Physical Activity in Social Context
We will examine how history, demography, and changing social norms influence older adults’ experiences of their aging and moving bodies.

Week#3 – The Aging Body and the Media
We will consider how representations of aging bodies are informed by and reproduce ageism with concomitant implications for health and physical activity.

Week#4 – Health, Physical Activity, and Consumer Culture
We will explore the role of consumer culture in the social construction and experience of health and physical activity.

Week#5 – Gender and Body Image in Later Life
We will discuss the relationships between body image, gender, health, and physical activity.

Week#6 – Social Exclusion, Health, and Physical Activity
We will examine how social marginalization related to sexual orientation, racialization, socio-economic status, etc. influence older adults’ health and physical activity participation.

Week#7 – Chronic Illness and Pain in Later Life
We will consider the concepts of biographical disruption and biographical flow as we explore the experience of poor health, pain, and loss of mobility.

Week#8 – Exercise in Later Life
We will discuss the research and theorizing pertaining to older adults’ engagement in exercise, including the concepts of the Third and Fourth Ages.

Week#9 – The Sporting, Older Body
We will discuss the research and theorizing around older adults’ engagement in competitive sports, paying particular attention to successful aging narratives.

Week#10 – Social Activity/Inactivity and Health in Later Life
We will consider the social aspects of physical activity and their influence on health in later life.

Week#11 – Disability, Technology, and the Moving Older Body
We will examine the experience disability in later life, with a particular focus on assistive technologies and the built environment.

Week#12 → Student Presentations

Week#13 → Student Presentations