KIN 425: AGING, HEALTH, AND THE BODY
Class Location: Room 107, The Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre
Class Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am to 12:30pm

Instructor: Dr. Laura Hurd Clarke
Email: laura.hurd.clarke@ubc.ca

Teaching Assistant: Deana Kanagasingam
Email: deana.kanagasingam@ubc.ca.

Telephone: (604) 822-4281
Office: Annex Auditorium A, Room 156C, 1924 West Mall
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course considers the socio-cultural research and theorizing pertaining to aging, health, and embodiment. In particular, we will focus on older adults’ experiences and perceptions of ageism, body image, chronic illness, consumer culture, dependence, disability, gender, identity, mobility, sexuality, sport, and physical activity.

Rationale
Population aging is dramatically altering Canadian society as there are now more people over the age of 65 than there are under the age of 15 (Statistics Canada, 2016). As Baby Boomers continue to transition into retirement, the aging of Canada’s population will increase such that by 2035 one in four Canadians will be aged 65+. The resultant shift in Canada’s demographic fabric will have important implications for kinesiologists and other health professionals, many of whom can anticipate working with older clients. This course will equip students with an in-depth understanding of the social context of later life and will, therefore, be invaluable to kinesiology students interested in working with older adults and/or those wanting to pursue future graduate level education in the socio-cultural area of kinesiology.

Aims and Outcomes
Students taking this course will become familiar with the sociological theories and socio-cultural research concerned with aging and embodiment in later life. They will gain an understanding of how aging is a social as well as physical process. They will further gain knowledge as to how older adults navigate changes to their bodies in relation to cultural norms and stereotypes that privilege health, independence, and youthfulness. Throughout the course, students will be tasked with critically thinking about taken-for-granted cultural assumptions about aging and older adults. They will be given opportunities to reflect on contentious debates about what it means to age successfully and how society works to exclude older adults as full and valued citizens.

Educational Outcomes and Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Describe the socio-cultural context of aging and having an older body.
2. Describe and explain key sociological concepts in the socio-cultural study of aging, including ageism, body image, embodiment, biographical disruption, biographical flow, the Third and Fourth Ages, and successful aging.

3. Describe how an older adult’s experiences of mobility and physical activity are shaped and constrained by social norms (e.g. ageism, gender norms and roles, etc.) and positions (e.g. age, culture, gender, social class, etc.).

4. Demonstrate proficiency in presenting, critically discussing, and writing about the socio-cultural context of aging, health, and the body.

CLASS FORMAT
The course will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 to 12:30pm. The class format will include lectures, discussions, student presentations, and guest speakers. As the course is intended to be a collaborative effort, students’ attendance and active participation in class are crucial components. The class will meet as a large group on Tuesdays in Room 107, The Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre. On Thursdays (beginning on week#4, September 28, 2017), the class will be divided into two, with one group meeting in Room 107, The Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre and the other group meeting in the Irving K Barber Learning Centre, Room 461. Details to follow regarding the division of the class into two groups.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS
Attendance/Missed Classes
Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students who miss class due to medical/serious family emergencies or as a result of varsity athletic commitments AND who have appropriate documentation will have the option to complete a brief (one to two pages) reflective writing assignment per missed class based on the weekly readings in order to receive their attendance marks. These reflective writing assignments must be handed in upon return to class along with appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation is not considered to be a note from a family member or other similar person but rather constitutes a note from varsity athletics, a medical certificate, a death certificate, a funeral leaflet, etc.

Additionally, if the missed class occurs on the day that a student was scheduled to deliver his/her presentation, s/he will need to contact the instructor as soon as possible so as to reschedule for an alternative time. Once again, appropriate documentation will be required in order to justify the rescheduling of the assignments or the student will receive a zero.

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, and only when appropriate supporting documentation is provided. Students must contact the instructor prior to the due date of the paper in order to obtain an extension.

**Late Papers**
Late reflection papers and 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. Because we have limited reception hours at the Annex Auditorium A, 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.

**Email**
Questions through email are always welcome but please be aware that it may take me up to 24 hours to respond to your email and I do not check email on weekends. Please include your course name (i.e. KIN 425) in the subject line of your email.

**READINGS AND RESOURCES**
There is a Custom Course Package available for purchase from the UBC bookstore that is required reading.

Class notes, including those from the instructor’s opening remarks and the students’ presentations, will be posted on Connect.

Additional information about the course, including handouts about the specific assignments, will be made available on the Connect website for the course.

**EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper#1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper#2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation
Participation marks (10% of the total grade) will be based on four things: a) attendance; b) submission of weekly questions about the readings; c) completion of discussion leader roles, and d) provision of formal feedback regarding peers’ presentations. Students are expected to come to class having read the readings and prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Students must also hand in two, typed questions at the beginning of class on Tuesdays based on that week’s readings (one question per reading). Twice per term, students will assume a leadership role in the class discussion of the weekly readings. Finally, students will be required to provide feedback to the instructor on their peers’ group presentations.

Reflection Papers
Students will complete two critical reflections, each worth 10% of their final grade. Each assignment will require that students write a **500-word essay (two pages double-spaced)**, not including references of a title page, which must also be included) in response to a question posed by the instructor. For example, you may be asked to consider the strengths and limitations of a particular concept for understanding the experiences of older adults or you may be asked to reflect on a current event using class material. The first reflection paper question will be assigned on Tuesday September 19th (week#3) and will be due in class on Tuesday, September 26th. The second reflection paper question will be assigned on Tuesday, October 24th (week#8) and will be due in class on Tuesday October 31st. Further details to follow.

Presentation
This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade. Beginning in week#4, students will individually present on topics related to that week’s theme. Presentations can include short video clips but the bulk of the presentation should entail students speaking directly to their peers, using interactive examples, or engaging the class in creative and thoughtful ways. Further details to be provided.

Research Paper
This assignment is worth 40% of the total grade. Each student will write an individual review of the current socio-cultural research on a topic that fits within the scope of the course. Students are strongly encouraged to write a research paper on the same topic as their presentation (although this is not a requirement). The paper is to be **8 to 10 pages in length, excluding a title page and references list**. Papers are to be handed in on the last day of class (Thursday, November 30th). Further details to be provided.
WEEKLY TOPICS

Week#1 – Introduction

Summary: Note: There is no class on Tuesday, September 5th. During our first class on Thursday, September 7th, we will discuss the scope and evaluation procedures of the course. There are no required readings this week.

Week#2 – Aging, Health, and the Body in Social Context

Summary: This week we will begin to discuss the social context of aging, health, and the body by exploring historical influences, demographic shifts, and changing cultural norms pertaining to later life. We will also begin to explore the concept of embodiment as it pertains to aging. Students will sign up for a presentation week.

Readings:


Additional Suggested (Not Required) Reading:

Week#3 – The Aging Body and the Media

Summary: This week we will explore how the aging body is constructed and portrayed in the media and how media images both reflect and differ from the social and physical realities of growing older. In doing so, we will additionally examine the moving/static older body and representations of health and physical activity.

Readings:


Additional Suggested (Not Required) Reading:


**Week#4 – The Aging Body and Consumer Culture**

**Summary:** Discussing the proliferation of anti-aging products and services, this week we will examine older adults’ engagement in consumer culture (from the use of Viagra and Botox, to various self-care and health promotion strategies) as a response to physical aging and societal ageism.

**Readings:**


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


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 – Gender, Aging, and the Body**

**Summary:** This week we will review the research and theorizing pertaining to gender and the aging body. We will discuss if and how older men’s and women’s perceptions of their bodies’ appearances are influenced by ageist norms.

**Readings:**

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


**Week#6 – Experiencing Illness and Disability in Later Life**

**Summary:** This week we will discuss the chronically ill and/or disabled aging body and theoretical debates surrounding the impact of illness on identity – specifically the competing concepts of biographical disruption versus biographical flow.

**Readings:**
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.


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


Week#7 – Independence/Dependence and the Aging Body

Summary: This week we will discuss the complex and often conflicting societal meanings attributed to dependence and independence.

Readings:


Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:


Week#8 – The Physically Active/Inactive Older Body

Summary: Examining the debates surrounding the concept of ‘successful aging’, this week we will discuss the aging body and embodiment in relation to physical activity.

Readings:

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.

Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

Week#9 – The Socially Active/Inactive Older Body

Summary: This week we will discuss social activity and inactivity in later life with a particular focus on leisure, social isolation, well-being, and the resistance of ageism.

Readings:


Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:


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 – Sexuality and the Aging Body

Summary: This week we will discuss sexuality in later life, with particular attention on social taboos surrounding the sexual, older body.

Readings:


Additional Suggested (Not Required) Readings:


**Week#11 – Dementia and Embodiment in Later Life**

**Summary:** This week we will discuss the embodied experience of dementia, with particular attention on the relationships between identity and the body.

**Readings:**


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


**Week#12 – Technology and the Aging Body**

**Summary:** This week we will explore the relationship between embodiment and technology in later life, with a particular focus on assistive technology, mobility, and social inclusion/exclusion.

**Readings:**


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

**Week#13: Wrap Up**