

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND
Department of Sociology
Sociology/Anthropology 3318-Culture and Aging
Spring 2006

Course: Sociology 3318-Culture and Aging
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Classroom: A-2065
Class Schedule: M-W-F 11:00-11:55 am
Office: A-3092
Telephone: 737-3977 or 7443 (to leave message)
Office Hours: M-T 12:00 am-2:00 pm or by appointment
E-mail: Via WebCT¹
Course webpage: <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~lewis/SA3318.htm>

Course Description and Objectives: The subject of this course is the social and cultural aspects of aging. The emphasis in the course is on how the social sciences (sociology and anthropology in particular) conceptualize and treat old age rather than the specific findings of sociologists and anthropologists on the aged.

Course Objectives: This course is designed to introduce you to the sociological and anthropological treatments of aging. The course is also designed to further your familiarity with doing sociology and anthropology, or at least some aspects of that, in particular doing library research and developing some of the skills, both intellectual and practical, necessary to do that.

Format: A combination of lecture and seminar course, your input will be required and will partly determine your grade in the course. Specific readings will be assigned each week and will be the subject of that class. Think of your in class participation as a weekly exam in place of a mid-term and final. As you read the assigned material think of how they are sociological. All readings should be done critically, while you are expected to understand the readings, you are free to agree or disagree with them; formulating clear and comprehensible criticisms are central to sociology (along with the other social sciences). Don't get behind, as, while there are no wrong views or opinions on the readings, there are uninformed ones.

¹ If WebCT is impossible for you (and there is no good reason it should be) then you can email at lewis@mun.ca, however, S/A 3318 must be in the subject line or e-mails will probably be treated as SPAM.

WebCT: While it is not necessary that you use WebCT in this course, using it will make the course go along more easily. You will find that all of the topics and readings for the classes can be found in the Calendar, weekly questions will be asked in the discussion section of the course, email is easily sent to me though the WebCT mail (and doesn't go through my SPAM filter so won't get lost that way if you forget to put SA 3318 in the subject line), you can use the chat rooms, or the discussion areas. To get on to WebCT go [here](#) and enter your 9-digit student number and 6-digit PIN (from Student Web, or the first six digits of that PIN if it is more than six digits) to log in. There is lots of help available throughout WebCT (from the sign-in page there are guides, help, and FAQs and when you are in WebCT there is always context sensitive help in the upper right corner of the screen). And always feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Required Texts: There is no required text for this class. Readings, on the web or on reserve, are assigned for each week.

Recommended books:

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., & Turner, B. S. (2000). *The Penguin dictionary of sociology* (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Penguin Books. [Other additions are also available.

A college level dictionary.

Note: You must do the readings before the class which covers the subject of the readings. Abercrombie, Hill & Turner (2000) and your college dictionary should be used whenever reading. Your basic philosophy should be: "If I don't know what a word or phrase means, I'll find out what it means," by using your dictionary, Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner (2000), or by asking me.

Course Requirements and Evaluation: Students are expected to keep up with the readings and lecture materials. Grading for each component is as follows:

	Date due:	Percent:
Short assignments (pass/fail)		
Assignment #1	May 24	5
Assignment #2	May 31	5
Assignment #3	June 7	5
Annotated bibliography	June 16	15
Term paper	July 24 or July 31	35
Class presentation	Various	10
Class participation	Over the whole term	15
WebCT questions	Over the whole term	10
TOTAL		100%

Questions/Contact Information: You can contact me with any questions you have either via e-mail or by telephone during office hours. I may also be in my office at other times but I cannot guarantee that and I may not be able to talk then if I am in (I have other courses that I am teaching as well). I do not appreciate being contacted at home.

Resources: You might find the following web sites helpful.

Memorial QEII Library Internet Resources for Sociology:

URL: <http://www.mun.ca/library/internet/subjects/sociology.html>

Memorial QEII Library Reference Sites:

URL: <http://www.mun.ca/library/internet/reference/>

Class Guidelines: The lectures, readings, and seminars are designed to complement each other. To make best use of the lectures/seminars you will need to have read the relevant items before the class.

Library research assignments, (5% each, pass/fail):

These are exercises in finding social scientific research and writing on aging and society. While they are worth five points each they will also serve as the basis for your annotated bibliography and, in turn, your term paper. Instructions on these are found below and how to do them will be demonstrated in class.

Assignment #1: Due May 24. Note, the class will be held in L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library)

On May 17 and 19 meet in room L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library) where someone from Information Services of the library will demonstrate how to do the following assignment.

You are doing an annotated bibliography and a critical review of the literature on the topic of some aspect of the social and cultural aspects of aging. You should have read the course outline, looked at the topics covered in the course, and decided which general area you are interested in doing an annotated bibliography and critical review of the literature on (if you change your mind before next week that isn't a big deal, you can do the search again, it's good practice).

One aspect of doing an annotated bibliography and critical a review of the literature is finding the literature you will need to read in order to do these two exercises. Far and away the most efficient way to do that is through electronic databases that gather information on different areas of research. There are a number of these databases; the one you will use for this assignment is *Sociological Abstracts*.

I want you to find around twenty (20) references (but don't get hung-up on the number) that are on the same subject as your annotated bibliography and critical review of the

literature you plan to do. At least 15 of these references will be journal articles, some of the other five references can be of another form (e.g., books, government documents, etc.). Using the electronic database *Sociological Abstracts*, find at least fifteen journal articles (be careful, not all entries in *Sociological Abstracts* are journal articles) on the same subject as the article that you are critiquing.

Email to yourself (**not to me**, yet) the information (author, date, title, abstract, etc., (**NB include the search strategies**, in Cambridge Sociological Abstracts this is the 'Search Query') you get from your searches. You should then e-mail me, through WebCT, the results you get with the subject Assignment 1 on it. Send the whole assignment as a single e-mail message. If you send me the assignment as an e-mail attachment do so in a readily readable format, (e.g., WordPerfect, Word, or as a Rich Text File) though it should only be a text file. E-mail me the assignment by May 24.

You are mistaken if you think that what you have done is too easy and that you must have missed something. It is easy and it is worth five points towards your final grade. Keep a copy of your assignment, as it will form one of the bases of your annotated bibliography.

The main point of this exercise is to learn the technique for using *Sociological Abstract*. You probably will want to do this search again using a different set of search terms. The references you find for this assignment do not have to be in your annotated bibliography or paper.

In this class you will also be shown how to access on-line journals.

Assignment #2: Due May 31. Note, the class will be held in L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library).

On May 24 and 26 we will meet in room L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library) where someone from Information Services of the library will demonstrate how to do the following assignment.

In the previous assignment we looked for research and writing on aging by looking for works by topic. That is not the only way to find works on some subject; another way is to look for works that have been cited by others who, probably, are writing on the same topic as the cited work. This is especially useful when the subject you are interested isn't one that doesn't fit neatly into the subjects that databases use or where what you are interested in is not the main subject of the work.

From the 'References' section from one of the articles you have already collected for your annotated bibliography (probably from assignment #1, but the source is not important), find some references which look like it is relevant to your annotated bibliography or paper (decide which is the most relevant if possible).

In the computer lab you will be taught how to use the Web of Science Social Science Citation Index. What you will get are journal articles that cited (i.e., had in the reference section or bibliography) the work also cited in the article that you are critiquing.

Take the information you find (author, date, title, abstract, and what ever else you think might be useful, NB include the search strategy) from the Index and email it to yourself (you can also down load it to a floppy disk or print it but these are less useful), for about twenty works which look like they may be of use to you in doing your annotated bibliography and paper.

Determine which of the works you found on the Social Science Citation Index are available from one of Memorial's libraries. Mark which works are available on what you hand in.

As with the previous assignment, e-mail me, through WebCT, the results you get with the subject Assignment 2 on it by May 31.

Keep a copy of your assignment.

Assignment #3: Due June 7. Note, the class will be held in L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library).

On May 31 and June 2 we will meet in room L-1015/1016 (in the basement of the QE II Library) where someone from Information Services of the library will demonstrate how to do the following assignment.

This assignment is essentially a repeat of assignment #1 but you will be looking for sources from disciplines other than the social sciences, in particular the health sciences. You will be shown you how to use a number of databases (I am not sure which yet, but these will also help you to tackle new databases which you have not yet seen).

Follow the directions for assignment #1 to complete this assignment except do not use Sociological Abstracts.

Annotated bibliography: Due June 16 (15%)

An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that, besides the complete bibliographic information, includes a brief description of the work cited. For this exercise this will include journal articles, chapters of books, books, dissertations, etc., primarily of an academic nature (i.e., not popular literature like the Evening Telegram or Time or websites aimed at a general audience). Assignments #s 1, 2, and 3 should have provided you with the sources you will use. The citations will be in APA format (if that is a major problem speak to me about it). The annotation should give enough information to show why the complete work is useful to what you are doing. While annotations may be descriptive or critical, for this assignment it will be primarily descriptive (though all

readings must have a critical component). Each annotation should be from about 100 to about 200 words. For further instructions on doing an annotated bibliography see:

Sexty, S. (1999, February 1, 1999). *How to write annotated bibliographies* [Web page]. Memorial Libraries Web Team. Retrieved September 7, 2002, from the World Wide Web:

http://www.mun.ca/library/research_help/qeii/annotated_bibl.html

An annotation looks like the following:

Range, J., & Vinovskis, M. A. (1981). Images of elderly in popular magazines: A content analysis of Littell's Living Age, 1845-1882. *Social Science History*, 5(2), 123-170.

Range and Vinovskis undertake an historical study of popular media of the 19th century to test the theories of Fischer (1978) and Achenbaum (1978) that the status and position of the elderly declined in the 19th century. They do a content analysis of short stories from a random sample of 293 issues of Littell's Living Age, a popular magazine of the time. They find that, though there was a gradual decline in the appearance of the elderly over the period of study (however, the level of statistical significance is not given), the elderly were portrayed as "remarkably healthy, sane, and economically independent of their children or society. Furthermore ... for the most part the elderly were portrayed as being treated with affection, reverence, respect, or deference." (p. 156). Despite that, they claim that the decline in the status and position of the elderly did occur in the 19th century but that the short stories in Littell's Living Age do not mirror it.

Note that the reference is in APA format, this is the reference and citation format I expect for the annotated bibliography and your term paper). Note as well that the annotation (i.e., the description of the work) is **not** a copy of the abstract of the article nor is it just a rewrite of the abstract. Instead it is **your** description of the article written in light of the topic of your term paper. You cannot do the annotation unless you have read the article, book, book chapter, website, or report and any annotations made of articles you have not read (i.e., you have only read the abstract or descriptions of the source in other sources) are not acceptable. For your annotations you do not need to list the position and institutional affiliation of the author(s), unless it is particularly noteworthy or of direct significance to your term paper. Unless the paper or book is not written at an academic level, you do not need to mention the level it is written at (i.e., the assumption is that it is written at the academic level and that it is aimed at an academic/educated audience).

I would expect that there would be roughly 8-15 works in your annotated bibliography, though one with a large number of books (as opposed to journal articles) might have fewer. Your annotated bibliography will be the basis for your term paper. Besides the printed copy I want you to email a copy of your annotated bib (which I will grade), this must be sent as an attachment in Word, WordPerfect, or RTF (Word if you are able).

Class presentation: Due date July 14-August 4 (10%)

You will present what you are doing for your term paper in class. This is an opportunity for others in the class to help you to improve your term paper by questioning and critiquing what you present. When you present will be determined by decided in the first couple of classes, first come, first serve. In assigning grades to this I will take into account the amount of time you have had to prepare (though note, people who present earlier will have more time to incorporate suggestions from the class into their paper).

Term paper: Due July 24 or July 31 (35%)

This will be a critical review of the literature on some topic with relevance to the sociology or anthropology of aging and old age. The exact subject will be determined to a great extent by what you find in your bibliographic search. For example, if you find far too many sources you may want to narrow your topic, e.g., from the topic 'changes in the status of the elderly with modernization' to the topic 'changes in the status of the elderly with modernization in 19th century North America' or conversely if you do not find enough sources on your topic of interest you may want to broaden it, e.g., from the more specific 'aged criminals' to the more general 'crime and the aged' (i.e., the aged as both agents and victims of crime). Note that both of these are just examples, I cannot say, without actually starting to do them, if they are really too broad or too narrow.

This will be your critical analysis of the literature you put together for your annotated bibliography.

By this point in your university career you should know what critical writing is. When I say critically writing this means that you should be asking, among other things: 1) do the studies actually do what they claim to; 2) do the studies examine issues that really are important (either because they are intrinsically important or because they look at some phenomenon which hasn't been examined before or hasn't been examined in some particular way); 3) what important issues does the study leave out (explicitly or not) and therefore what studies do you think need to be done. Critical writing doesn't mean finding fault regardless, it means looking for 'faults', testing the findings. We will talk about this more in class.

Obviously this paper will be made up of mostly your ideas, i.e., your argument, with the writings and ideas of others only presented as necessary for your argument. It is not a simple book report (i.e., this is what so and so said, and so and so said, and so and so ... etc.). Rather, it is an argument, your argument, about some subject in which you will use the writings of others to support your argument (either directly supporting what you say or as further examples of what you are arguing against).

This paper be primarily original work. It **will not** be the simple cobbling together of other people's writing. Where you use other people's writing it will be short and properly cited (i.e., quoted and the source given). Papers that are simply the cobbling together of one properly attributed quote or paraphrase after another are not what is required for this

paper. If you are unsure about quoting or about what constitutes original work consult with me. **Papers which include quotes or paraphrases which are not properly attributed are not acceptable and will result in a failing grade on this term paper and the possibility of further action.**

As for the down and dirty questions of length, style, etc. I expect it to be typed (double spaced, reasonable font) if this is not possible see me. While I don't have a set length, I would expect the paper to be in the 10-20 page range. The works examined need to be properly cited, using APA. Besides the printed copy I want you to email a copy of your paper (which I will grade), this must be sent as an attachment in Word, WordPerfect, or RTF (Word if you are able).

There are two due dates; papers turned in by July 24 will receive written comments, suggestions, and a detailed reason for the grade the paper received. Papers turned in after July 24 and by July 31 will not receive written comments, suggestions, and a detailed reason for the grade the paper but simply a grade. No extensions will be given without a valid and documented reason. In the past I have been fairly lax on lateness; some students abused this and others have said that it would be better for them if I was strict on due dates, so I will be this term. Late papers without a valid reason will receive 20 marks off for each day late.

Class participation (15%)

Think of class participation as a small oral quiz in each class. If you participate then you can talk about the things that you want to and are prepared for, if I have to ask you then you take your chances. I will record how you do in each class and throw out your four worst classes (including those you weren't at), I will then add up what I have recorded for your final grade. If your participation in class is evidence to me that you have read and thought about the course material then you will receive full marks for class participation. If you are unable to speak in class (it is not really *in public*) then speak to me after class or before the next class. To make best use of the classes you must read the relevant items before the class.

WebCT questions (10% total, 5 at 2% each, pass/fail on each)

About 48 hours before each Monday class (hopefully after you have done the assigned readings for that week) I will post a question on the WebCT site on the readings for that week. You will email me the response to that through WebCT no later than mid-night the night before the class. I only expect a sentence or two in response. If your answer shows that you have read the reading (even if you don't understand it) you will get the full mark for it. If you do not answer it or your answer shows no evidence to me that you have read the reading, you will get a zero. I will count your five best responses. Note, there will be no grades given for late answers (i.e., if the end of term is approaching and you haven't done any of these you cannot make those marks up). There are three reasons for this exercise: 1) to 'encourage' you to do the readings before class; 2) to

help me understand what you do or do not understand about the readings so that I can deal with that in class; and 3) give some points to those people who simply cannot speak up in class (class participation was 25% of the final mark, it is now 15%).

CLASS OUTLINE (provisional)

Week 1: May 8-12

Topics: Introduction, requirements, and logic of the course.

Readings: 1. The course outline (i.e., this).
2. Haworth, A. (1999). Only one cheer for Sokal and Bricmont: Or, scientism is no response to relativism. *Res Publica*, 5(1), 1-20. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

Week 2: May 15-19, May 17 and 19 meet in L-1015/1016.

Topics: Gerontology, theories, and methods.

Readings: 1. Chapman, S. A. (2005). Theorizing about aging well: Constructing a narrative. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 24(1), 9-18. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

Week 3: May 22-26, May 24 and 26 meet in L-1015/1016, May 24 Assignment #1 due.

Topic: Aging and the body?

Readings: 1. Turner, B. S. (1995). Aging and identity: Some reflections on the somatization of the self. In M. Featherstone & A. Wernick (Eds.), *Images of aging: Cultural representations of later life*, (pp. 245-260). London, U.K.: Routledge. [\[on reserve\]](#)

Week 4: May 29-June 2, May 31 and June 2 meet in L-1015/1016, May 31 Assignment #2 due.

Topic: Aging and bodily death.

Readings: 1. Meinwald, D. *Memento Mori: Death and Photography in Nineteenth Century America*. Retrieved May 3, 2006, from http://138.23.124.165/exhibitions/memento_mori/default.html [on-line]

Week 5: June 5-9, June 7 Assignment #3 due

Topic: Aging and demography

Readings: 1. Denton, F. T., & Spencer, B. G. (1999, March). *Population aging and its economic costs: A survey of the issues and evidence*. Retrieved July 20, 2004, from <http://ideas.repec.org/p/mcm/qsepr/340.html> [on-line]

Week 6: June 12-16

Topic: Aging in the past?

Readings: 1. Laslett, P. (1995). Necessary knowledge: Age and aging in the societies of the past. In D. I. Kertzer & P. Laslett (Eds.), *Aging in the past: Demography, society, and old age* (pp. 3-80). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Also available on line [here](#).

Week 7: June 23

Topic: Aging in the past?

Video: *Dadi's family* [to be shown in class but also on reserve in the [Media and Data Centre](#)]

Week 8: June 26-30

Topic: Aging, family, and social support

Readings: 1. Aboderin, I. (2004). Modernisation and ageing theory revisited: Current explanations of recent developing world and historical Western shifts in material family support for older people. *Ageing and Society*, 24, 29-50. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

2. McDaniel, S., & Lewis, R. (1998). Did they or didn't they? Intergenerational supports in Families Past: A case study of Brigus, Newfoundland, 1920-1945. In L. Chambers & E.-A. Montigny (Eds.), *Family matters: Papers in post-Confederation Canadian family history* (pp. 475-497). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press. [\[on reserve\]](#)

Week 9: July 5-7

Topic: Writing and citation styles.

Readings: TBA

Week 10: July 10-14

Topic: Pensions, retirement and work.

Readings: 1. Kemp, C. L., & Denton, M. (2003). The allocation of responsibility for later life: Canadian reflections on the roles of individuals, government, employers and families. *Ageing and Society*, 23, 737-760. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

2. Government of Canada - Social Development Canada. (2004, March 19). *Income Security Programs*. Retrieved July 23, 2004, from http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/isp.shtml [background material, available on-line]

Week 11: July 17-21

Topic: Health care.

- Readings: 1. McDaniel, S. A., & Chappell, N. L. (1999). Health care in regression: Contradictions, tensions and implications for Canadian seniors. *Canadian Public Policy*, 25(1), 123-132. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).
2. Robine, J.-M., & Michel, J.-P. (2004). Looking forward to a general theory on population aging. *The Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, 59(6), M590-M597. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

Week 12: July 24-28

Topic: Societal change.

- Readings: 1. Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2002). The third age: Class, cohort or generation? *Ageing and Society*, 22, 369-382. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

Week 13: July 31-August 4

Topic: Imagining your future: aging, agism, death, and society

- Readings: 1. McHugh, K. E. (2003). Three faces of ageism: Society, image and place. *Ageing and Society*, 23, 165-185. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).
2. Walz, T. (2002). Cronos, dirty old men, sexy seniors: Representations of the sexuality of older persons. *Journal of Aging and Identity*, 7(2), 99-112. [\[on-line through library\]](#) How to [access electronic journals](#).

GRADING SCHEME

Grades for the paper and class participation will follow the following guidelines (from the Memorial Calendar 2005-2006²), taking into account the nature of the work done (i.e., exam versus essay):

- A 80 to 100%
- B 65 to 79%
- C 55 to 64%
- D 50 to 54%
- F below 50%

Description of Grades

"A" indicates EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE with clear evidence of

- a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and principles treated in the course
- a high degree of originality and independence of thought
- a superior ability to organize and analyze ideas and
- an outstanding ability to communicate

"B" indicates GOOD PERFORMANCE with evidence of

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter
- a moderate degree of originality and independence of thought
- a good ability to organize and analyze ideas and
- an ability to communicate clearly and fluently.

"C" indicates SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE with evidence of

- an acceptable grasp of the subject matter
- some ability to organize and analyze ideas and
- ability to communicate adequately

"D" indicates MINIMALLY ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE with evidence of

- rudimentary knowledge of the subject matter
- some evidence that organizational and analytical skills have been developed, but with significant weaknesses in some areas, and
- significant weakness in the ability to communicate

"F" indicates FAILING PERFORMANCE with evidence of

- an inadequate knowledge of the subject matter
- failure to complete required work.
- inability to organize and analyze ideas and
- inability to communicate or failure to complete required work

² <http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/UnivRegsGrading.htm>