



## SOC 597.001 Aging and the Elderly Fall 2012

**Professor: William E. Thompson, Ph.D.**

**Office Location: Ferguson Social Science 229**

**Office Hours: M 3:00-4:15 p.m., T,W,R 9:30-11:00 a.m.; other times by appointment**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course introduces students to the science of gerontology and the sociology of aging and the elderly.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** This graduate course has the following major objectives:

1. Understand the social science of gerontology and the sociological approach to the study of aging and the elderly.
2. Identify and explain some of the major physical, psychological, and social issues associated with aging.
3. Understand the influence of age, race, sex, and social class on aging.
4. Identify important social, cultural, political, and economic issues facing a society where the largest single age cohort will soon be over 65 years of age.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills on the subjects of aging and the elderly.

**REQUIRED BOOKS:** *The Sociology of Aging* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) by Diana K. Harris, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-7425-4558-8; *Annual Editions: Aging 12/13* edited by Harold Cox, McGraw-Hill, 2012, ISBN: 978-0-07-805120-3; *The Glass House*, by William E. Thompson, Season of Harvest, 2006, ISBN: 978-0-9679483-2-4.. These books are available in the university bookstore.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

**CLASS FORMAT:** This is a graduate seminar. The purpose is *not* for the professor to dispense information and the students to try to absorb it. Rather, we all will be reading the same materials and working together in class to better prepare each other to teach sociology courses.

The environment will be totally open. Your participation in class discussion is not encouraged, it is *demand*ed! All ideas, comments, opinions, etc., will be heard. Likewise, all of them will be questioned, analyzed, and critically scrutinized. Do not be timid and do not "wear your feelings on your shirtsleeves." On the other hand, be cognizant of other's feelings and do nothing to interfere with another person's learning opportunities.

**STATEMENT OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR :** As stated in the student handbook: “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information.)

**THIS CLASSROOM IS A “SAFE SPACE”**

All persons who enter this classroom will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, race, sex, social class, religion, politics, sexual orientation , and/or lifestyle. There will be “Zero Tolerance” in this classroom for any form of ageism, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, or any other form of prejudice, discrimination, or bigotry.

**ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:** It should go without saying that attendance at all class sessions is extremely important. The class meets only once a week and there is no possible way to gain the information lost by missing class discussions. It is inevitable that one or two of you will have to miss a session for some very good reason. If this is the case, please check with others in the class to see what you missed. If you anticipate missing more than two class sessions, you probably should drop the course. At the end of the semester your attendance and participation will count for up to 50 pts.

**EXAMINATIONS:** There will be two major examinations, a mid-term and a final, worth 100 pts. each. They will be essay-type exams covering the material in class up to the date of the exam. They are on the course schedule. Please do not schedule anything that conflicts with those dates.

**BOOK CRITIQUE:** A critique of The Glass House will be due on Monday, November 26 at the beginning of class. Critiques should be approximately 3-5 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font). Critiques should follow the basic format provided at the end of this syllabus. Critiques are worth

**CRITICAL THINKING PAPERS:** There will be 5 critical thinking papers analyzing what we learned from guest speakers in the course. They will be worth 10 pts. each for a total of 50 pts.

**GRADES:** Grades will be based on the two exams worth 100 pts. each (200 pts), the book critique (100 pts.), 5 critical thinking papers (10 pts. ea.) and attendance/participation (50 pts.).

- A = 90-100% (360-400 total pts.)
- B = 80 - 89% (320--359 total pts.)
- C = 70 - 79% (280-319 total pts.)
- D = 60 - 69% (240-279 total pts.)
- F = < 60 % (< 240 total pts.)

**POLICIES ON ENROLLMENT, "Xs", AND WITHDRAWAL:** All policies regarding last day for enrollment, dropping without a grade, withdrawal from class, and the use of "X" will be rigidly adhered to in this course. Students should check the student handbook, current semester schedule, and the appropriate bulletin boards for specific deadlines. Seeing that all university procedures are properly followed is the student's responsibility.

**CHEATING AND PAGIARISM:** Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will **not** be tolerated. Anyone who participates in either activity will fail the course and the professor will initiate steps for the university to take further disciplinary action.

<b>TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS</b>
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There are no technology requirements for this course per se. Students should have access to a computer, however, to develop Power Point slides, use word processing, and access online materials as well as to check their MyLeo accounts for e-mails from the professor.

### **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

This course is taught face-to-face. The publisher of the introductory textbook provides an online site to accompany the textbook. The web address is on the back cover of the textbook.

### **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

#### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

The most effective way to communicate with the professor will be to come to class. The professor will be in his office during posted office hours and by appointment. The best way to make an appointment is to communicate directly with the professor immediately prior to or after class. Appointments can also be made via e-mail.

**E-MAIL COMMUNICATION:** I will communicate with the class through MyLeo e-mail. I will send out reminders about assignments, changes in syllabus, etc., to the entire class through e-mail using your official "My Leo" university e-mail address. Consequently, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check your e-mail regularly for messages from me. If you contact me via e-mail, please tell me your name and the course in which you are enrolled as part of your e-mail.

If you send me an e-mail, I will always read it and respond within a reasonable amount of time. Generally, if you send me an e-mail any time between Monday 8:00 a.m. and noon Friday, I will respond within 24 hours or sooner if possible. If, however, you e-mail me after noon on Friday, it will be Monday at the earliest before I respond. Fortunately, I am not a brain surgeon or cardiologist and none of the issues or assignments in this class are life or death matters. If you have a class-related problem or issue, DO NOT PANIC. Any problem that is class-related that occurs over the weekend can wait until the following Monday to be addressed.

#### ***ADA Statement***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
**Fax (903) 468-8148**  
**[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)**

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
27 Aug	Gerontology and the Study of Aging Guest Speaker(s): High School Student(s)	Harris, Ch. 1; Cox, #1
3 Sept.	Labor Day Holiday, No Class	
10 Sept.	Population, Boomers, & Longevity	Harris, Ch. 2; Cox, #5, #6. #10
17 Sept.	Cultural Values and Cultural Diversity	Harris, Ch. 4
24 Sept	Social, Biological, and Psych Aspects of Aging Guest Speaker: Dr. Richard Selvaggi	Harris, Ch. 5, Cox #9, #15
1 Oct.	Social Groups, Orgs, & Retirement Communities Social Stratification and Class	Harris, Ch. 6, Cox #23, #31 Harris, Ch. 7
8 Oct.	The Minority Elderly Guest Speakers:	Harris, Ch. 8
15 Oct.	Mid-Term Exam	
22 Oct.	The Family and Education	Harris, Ch. 9, Cox #13, #17
29 Oct.	The Economy, Work, & Retirement Guest Speaker: Dr. Paul Johnson	Harris, Ch. 10, Cox #34, #39
5 Nov.	Politics & Religion	Harris, Ch. 11, Cox #14, #35
12 Nov.	Deviance	Harris, Ch. 12
19 Nov.	Assisted Living, Nursing Homes, and Health Guest Speaker	Harris, Ch. 13; Cox #26, #29
26 Nov.	Death & Dying <b>Critique Due</b>	Harris, Ch. 14; Cox, #25, #27 <b>Thompson, <i>The Glass House</i></b>
3 Dec.	Income and Health Security	Harris, Ch. 15; Cox #38,
10 Dec.	Final Exam	

### **BOOK CRITIQUE FORMAT**

A critique of *The Glass House* will be due on Monday, November 26 at the beginning of class. Critiques should be approximately 3-5 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font). In a narrative format, the critique should address/answer the following points/questions:

1. What is the main thesis of the book?
2. How does the author go about developing or supporting this thesis?
3. What aspects of aging and the elderly does the book address?
4. Does the book make any type of contribution to the understanding of aging and the elderly? If so, what, and how?
5. Comment on the writing style, readability, etc., of the book.
6. What are some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the book?

7. Would you recommend this book to others? Why? Why not?