



Brescia University College

Family Studies 2265A (530): Midlife and the Elder Years

September - December 2015

Dr. Stephen Lin
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Office hours:
Fridays 3:30-4:30pm or by appointment

Class time/room:
Wednesdays 2:30pm - 3:30pm; Fridays 12:30pm - 2:30pm / BR 204

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines midlife and the elder stages of life from an interdisciplinary approach with a specific focus on family ties and aging. Theoretical perspectives and research approaches will be considered in relation to a variety of subject areas, including: health, living arrangements, various types of family relationships, informal and formal support, and work and retirement. The course heavily relies on a life course perspective that focuses on family ties and aging as a social process. Students will explore these two elements in greater depth and will appreciate the link between family life and other facets of social life in mid and later life. The implications of family ties and aging society and of research for social policy will be considered in relation to all core topics.

PREREQUISITE

Any Family Studies 1000-level course, or permission of instructor

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students who attend all the classes should be able to:

- critically apply core theoretical frameworks and concepts to social aspects of family.
- relate sociological concepts and research to real-life transitions in mid and later life.
- take a multi-level perspective which relates the political and economic environment, structured social relations (e.g., age, gender, class), social institutions (e.g., work and family), interpersonal relationships (especially with family members) and individual experience to one another.
- critically interpret quantitative and qualitative data related to family ties and aging presented in lay and professional sources.
- Improved proficiency in oral communication and writing skills.

TEXTBOOK

Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. 2010. *Family Ties & Aging*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press/Sage. (ISBN: 978-1-4129-5957-5)

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Teaching methods will include lectures and group discussions.

COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The course involves a large commitment of student participation and reading on your own. You are advised to attend to every lecture and view every media presentation, as well as participate in class activities at various levels. Missed lectures and any material given in class are the responsibility of the student, not the professor. **There will NOT be any make-up examinations nor extra work for the purpose of improving grades.**

Late submission of an assignment by due date will result in .5 deduction of total weight of the assignment for each day beyond the deadline except when the instructor recognizes that there are legitimate and documented exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness, death in the family).

The policies governing requests for academic accommodation for course components worth 10% or more of the course grade are outlined in the attached Academic Policies and Regulations.

Changes in information that appear in this course outline will be discussed in class prior to being implemented.

The written work will be evaluated on both of the contents and style. Your demonstrated ability to apply and integrate the conceptual materials learned from the course is one of the important aspects of evaluation. The other aspects centre on professional writing, including coherent, concise, comprehensive, spelling, grammar, punctuation, pagination, paragraphing, use of headings when necessary, precise citation and referencing.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Assignment	20%
In-Class Test	25%
Old Person Profile Assignment	30%
Final exam (TBA)	25%

Evaluation Details

1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Assignment (20%) – Wednesday, October 14

Students are asked to submit a **3 to 3.5 double-spaced typed page (12-pitch font)** paper that demonstrates your full understanding of the main theories and concepts that family scholars use to analyze various themes regarding family ties, aging and life course. The expectation of this assignment is listed as follows:

- clearly define the selected theories/perspectives and concepts in the context of family ties and aging
- demonstrate how the theories and concepts relate to each other their relationship in the context of family ties and aging
- provide your brief reflection on how the theories and concepts you choose contribute to family studies in general

You can link theories and concepts while defining them at the same time if this approach strengthens your paper flow. Please **fully edit your paper** before your submission to the online dropbox available on (OWL) by **midnight, Wednesday, October 14.**

2. In-Class Test (25%) – Friday, October 23

- This 2-hour in-class closed-book exam will cover course material from **September 11 up to October 16.** You should use **lecture slides and notes** as your primary preparation materials. The textbook can supplement your exam preparation.
- Exam format will be **multiple-choice** questions only.

3. Final Exam (25%) – During December Exam Period

- This 2-hour closed-book non-cumulative exam will cover course material after the midterm from **October 28 up to December 9.** You should use **lecture slides and notes** as your primary preparation materials. You can use the reading as supplement to your exam preparation.
- Exam format will be **multiple-choice** questions only.

4. Old Person Profile Assignment (30%)- Friday, December 11

Students will locate a photograph of an old person (known person or a celebrity figure) and develop an analytical narrative about that person that reflects key concepts and knowledge about aging and family ties obtained from the course. Describe the life of your subject and relate his or her life experiences to what you have learned about aging and family ties.

This is a chance to take a more creative approach to writing by **applying critically** what you have learned in the course to the life of your chosen subject. Discuss ways in which (and possible reasons why) your subject's experiences fit (and do not fit) typical patterns for his/her life stage, theoretical perspectives on aging, and life course trends for his/her demographic profile and position in society (structured social relations). This assignment should be **5 double-spaced typed pages (12-pitch font)** in length, excluding the space of the photo and the reference page and must be submitted electronically to the online dropbox made available through the course webpage (OWL) before **noon, Friday, December 11.**

The structure of this assignment is listed as follows:

- Summarize the chosen subject's life by highlighting key life events, turning points or important transitions of that subject in a chronological manner (1 page)
- Critically analyze the chosen subject's life by properly using relevant theories and concepts and course themes (4 pages)
- Include a reference page (the main textbook)

Tips:

1. Make sure you **explain why** the theory or concepts you use to analyze the old person's life are relevant or important.
2. Make sure you **connect the concepts and themes**, rather than apply them without showing their relationships.
3. Make sure your analytical section flows logically and cohesively. You are telling a story that is connected to some sort of themes, so readers can follow you easily.
4. You are expected to **draw the material mainly from this course**. Additional sources are not required, but you can use them if needed

Course Schedule & Readings

PART 1: INTRODUCTION & THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Sept 11:

Introduction of Course Material, Assignment & Expectation
Theoretical Orientation

- Connidis. Preface and Chapter 1, pp. 3-24. **Older Persons in a Family Context.**

PART 2: FAMILY TIES

September 16-18:

Overview of Family Ties over the Life Course & Conceptual/Theoretical Review

- Connidis, Chapter 2, 25-49. The Availability of Family Ties in Later Life: Demographic Trends and Family Structure.

September 23-25:

Intimate Ties & Partnerships

- Connidis, Chapter 3, pp. 53-64. Intimate Ties in Later Life
- Connidis, Chapter 4., pp. 65-80 (Interdependence; Marriage; Gay/Lesbian Partnerships). Intimate Partnerships

September 30-Oct 2:

The Impact of Life Transitions on Intimate Ties

- Connidis, Chapter 4, pp. 81--92. Intimate Partnerships
- Review

October 7-9:

Singlehood and Family Ties

- Connidis, Chapter 5, pp. 93-106. Being Single in Later Life

October 14-16:

Transitions in Intimate Relationships

- Connidis, Chapter 6, pp. 107-136. Transitions in Intimate Relationships: Losses and Opportunities.
- **Theoretical/Conceptual Map Assignment Due by midnight, October 14 (online dropbox submission)**

October 21-23:

- No class on Wednesday, October 21 (Study Day)
- **In Class Test #1 (25%) – Friday, October 23**

PART 3: INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

October 28:

The Complexity of Intergenerational Relations

- Connidis, Chapter 7, pp. 137-152. Exploring Intergenerational Relations.

****Note: No class on Friday, October 30 (Fall Reading Break)**

Nov 4-6:

Intergenerational Exchanges of Support

- Review of the ambivalence theoretical framework
- Connidis, Chapter 8, pp. 153-178. Support Exchanges Between Older Parents and Their Children.

Nov 11-13:

Childless People & Grandparents and Grandchildren

- Connidis, Chapter 9, pp. 179-186. Childless Older Persons.
- Connidis, Chapter 10, pp. 187-203. Grandparents and Grandchildren.

Nov 18-20:

Divorce, Remarriage, Step Ties & Intergenerational Relations

- Connidis, Chapter 11, pp.203-224.

PART 4: SIBLING TIES

Nov 25-27:

Sibling Ties & Exchanges of Support

- Connidis. Chapter 12, pp. 225-240. Sibling Ties in Middle and Later Life.
- Connidis. Chapter 13, pp. 241-258. Life Transitions and Sibling Ties.
- Old Age Person Profile Due by **Saturday Midnight, June 13**

PART 5: RESEARCH & POLICY

December 2-4:

Research & Policies

- Connidis. Chapter 14, pp. 259-top of 281. Research and Policy: Issues and Directions
- Review

December 9:

- No class, individual consultation for old person profile assignment (By appointment only)

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates) . You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.