



**FLORIDA
ATLANTIC
UNIVERSITY**

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST Undergraduate Programs

Department Sociology

College Arts and Letters

UUPC Approval 12/4/23

UFS Approval _____

SCNS Submittal _____

Confirmed _____

Banner Posted _____

Catalog _____

Current Course Prefix and Number SYP 3740

Current Course Title
Sociology of Aging & Dying

Syllabus must be attached for ANY changes to current course details. See Template. Please consult and list departments that may be affected by the changes; attach documentation.

Change title to:

Change prefix

From: _____ **To:** _____

Change course number

From: _____ **To:** _____

Change credits*

From: _____ **To:** _____

Change grading

From: _____ **To:** _____

Change WAC/Gordon Rule status**

Add Remove

Change General Education Requirements***

Add Remove

*See Definition of a Credit Hour.

**WAC/Gordon Rule criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See WAC Guidelines.

***GE criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See Intellectual Foundations Guidelines.

Change description to:

This course examines how aging and dying are defined, experienced, and managed in contemporary society. Moving beyond purely biological understandings of aging and dying, this course explores how cultural values and norms, social psychological processes, demographic trends, and social institutions shape these stages of the life course.

Change prerequisites/minimum grades to:

Change corequisites to:

Change registration controls to:

Please list existing and new pre/corequisites, specify AND or OR and include minimum passing grade (default is D-).

Effective Term/Year for Changes: Fall 2024

Terminate course? Effective Term/Year for Termination:

Faculty Contact/Email/Phone William McConnell/wmccconnell@fau.edu/561-297-3270

Approved by

Department Chair Ann Branaman

College Curriculum Chair [Signature]

College Dean [Signature]

UUPC Chair Korey Sorge

Undergraduate Studies Dean Dan Meeroff

UFS President _____

Provost _____

Date

11/6/23

11/13/23

11/14/23

12/4/23

12/4/23

Email this form and syllabus to mjenning@fau.edu seven business days before the UUPC meeting.

SYP 3740 – Sociology of Aging & Dying

Section 002, 3 credits, CRN 19254

Florida Atlantic University, Spring 2025

Phil Smith Hall (BU), Room 109

Instructional method: In-person

Tuesdays & Thursdays @9:30-10:50AM

This course counts toward the Sociology Major or Minor

This course has no prerequisites

Instructor: Dr. Will R. McConnell
Department: Sociology
Office: 250 Culture and Society Building (CU)
Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 11:00AM-1:00 PM and by appointment
Phone: (561) 297-3270 (Sociology main office)
Email: wmccconnell@fau.edu

TA: Katie Haggar
Email: khaggar2013@fau.edu
Office Hours: Weds, 11:00AM-1:00PM and by appointment (location: CU 253)

Course Description

This course examines how aging and dying are defined, experienced, and managed in contemporary society. Moving beyond purely biological understandings of aging and dying, this course explores how cultural values and norms, social psychological processes, demographic trends, and social institutions shape these stages of the life course.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able:

1. To read, write, and think sociologically about aging and dying.
2. To understand aging and dying in their social, cultural, and institutional context, rather than just their individual or medical context.
3. To understand social inequalities in the experience of aging and dying.
4. To think critically about contemporary aging and dying debates, creating your own informed perspective, with the capability to support your arguments with evidence.

Course Requirements

Required texts

Quadagno, Jill. *Aging and the Life Course*, 8th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2022. ISBN: 9781264169818

Access Options

First, you may be eligible to access a discounted ebook of this textbook for \$35 via **RedShelf**, a platform integrated into the Canvas site. Go to the Canvas site for this course and look for “**RedShelf Course Materials**” in the list to the left. If you choose to access the book this way, **you must opt in by January 15th, 2022.**

Second, please note that prior editions of the textbook may be more affordable, and they should work reasonably well (although page numbers may be inexact). All relatively recent print and digital editions should be usable.

Finally, I will place a personal copy of this textbook on reserve at the FAU Library (Boca). Go to the desk and ask the librarian to take out a textbook on course reserve. You can check out the textbook in the library for up to four hours each time.

Readings

All non-textbook readings will be posted on Canvas (<https://canvas.fau.edu/>). Readings will be posted at least one week before their due date. Often, I will assign additional materials including news articles, videos, and podcasts that will be linked online. You are expected to complete all assignments before the day they are listed in the syllabus. This will prepare you for class discussions and enable you to get the most out of class. Completion of readings and participation in discussions are important to your success in this class.

Graded Requirements

Attendance

Your success depends on attending class. I expect all students to be on time and stay for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken for every class. You have an unlimited number of fully documented University-approved absences (as described above) with no penalty to your grade. In addition, I will allow up to three (3) “unexcused” absences, no questions asked. Each unexcused absence after the fourth will result in a 2% (20pt) penalty to your final grade. Whenever you are absent you are still responsible for understanding the assigned material and in-class discussion for that day. I will take attendance during class and count your current absences on Canvas. It is your responsibility to periodically check your attendance grade for accuracy.

University statement on attendance: *Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon*

grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

Participation (5%)

This course will include daily in-class exercises, including written reflections, group work, and quizzes. The only way to complete these assignments is to be present in class. Your responses to these in-class assignments are your day-to-day chance to demonstrate your mastery of the assigned materials in this course (as opposed to higher stakes exams). Your attendance and in-class work will add up to 5% (50 pts) of your final grade. When you use one of your allotted absences, you will be excused from completing in-class assignments for that day. Typically, I will assign in-class work via the required Top Hat app (see below).

Top Hat

We will use the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. We will use the FREE Basic version of Top Hat for this class so no purchase is necessary.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) which outlines how you will register for an account and provides a brief overview to get you up and running.

An email invitation has been sent to you already, but if did not receive this email, you can register by visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/188154> (Our Course Join Code is **188154**). Do not pay for a subscription – sign up for free.

If you need assistance with Top Hat at any time, because they require specific user information to troubleshoot problems, please contact their Support Team directly by email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or call 1-888-663-5491.

Exams (60% total)

- **Exam #1, Tuesday 2/8**
- **Exam #2, Thursday 3/17**
- **Exam #3, Thursday 4/28 @7:45 AM**

Without a University-approved reason, students will not be allowed to take exams at any other time and must be present for the exams at the scheduled times. If you cannot take the final exam as scheduled, you should not take this class. Exam questions may consist of any combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay. Exam questions will cover lectures, reading assignments, and in-class discussions and activities. Exams are not cumulative—in other words, each exam will only cover the material from the preceding part of the course. Even so, you may be asked to apply foundational course concepts on several exams; we will review these concepts as necessary and I will provide a study guide for every exam. These exams comprise 60% of your grade (20% or 200 pts for each exam).

Short Papers (10% total)

You will complete two short (2-3 pages) papers during the course. These papers will ask you to do complete minor research related to aging populations, which will help provide additional context for your Interview Project (see below). The due dates are listed in the course schedule and on Canvas. Full instructions will be provided during class. Late papers will not be accepted.

Interview Project (25% total)

In the second half of the course, you will be asked to complete an Interview Project with an older adult – preferably someone in your life such as a grandparent or other individual who is 65+ years old. This project will involve talking with that individual, taking notes on their *life course*, and then writing a report about the interview. The report will make connections with course themes, concepts, and issues. Details will be provided during class. We will spend a full day discussing this project and preparing you to conduct the interview. Ultimately, you will turn in an interview summary (5% or 50 pts of final grade) and a 5-7 page written report (20% or 200 pts). Late projects will not be accepted.

Grading

Participation	5%	(50 points)
Short Paper #1	5%	(50)
Short Paper #2	5%	(50)
Interview Data/Summary	5%	(50)
Interview Project Report	20%	(200)
Exam #1	20%	(200)
Exam #2	20%	(200)
Exam #3	20%	(200)
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>(1000)</i>

Final grade scale

	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Points</i>		<i>Percent</i>	<i>Points</i>
A	94-100	940-1000	C	73-76	730-769
A-	90-93	900-939	C-	70-72	700-729
B+	87-89	870-899	D+	67-69	670-699

B	83-86	830-869	D	63-66	630-669
B-	80-82	800-829	D-	60-62	600-629
C+	77-79	770-799	F	≤ 59	599 or less

Course Policies

COVID-19 Statement, Spring 2022

Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases and the omicron variant, all students regardless of vaccination status are expected to wear masks while indoors in any FAU facilities, including classrooms and laboratories. Students experiencing flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or students who have come in contact with confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 should immediately contact FAU Student Health Services (561-297-3512). Symptomatic students will be asked to leave the classroom to support the safety and protection of the university community. For additional information visit www.fau.edu/coronavirus. In classes with face-to-face components, quarantined students should notify me immediately as you will not be able to attend class. I will not be able to offer an online version of the class but will make reasonable efforts to assist students in making up the work.

Code of Academic Integrity Policy Statement

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see [University Regulation 4.001](#).

Classroom Etiquette

We will discuss a variety of sensitive social issues in this class. Each person comes to class with a unique background and perspective; I encourage students to draw on that perspective during class discussions. Please keep in mind that sharing opinions and experiences is a valuable but sometimes uncomfortable experience, and everyone must make a commitment to create an atmosphere of respect for each person's contribution. Please be respectful and open-minded when listening to viewpoints different from your own. If you disagree with something that someone says, then you should criticize the evidence or argument that supports a stance, rather than the speaker who holds that view. A lack of courtesy will not be tolerated, and disrespectful persons may be asked to leave.

Electronic devices policy

Laptops will be permitted in class. It should also be noted that the potential for distraction while using a laptop in class is substantial, including for other students in your vicinity.

Students who fail to use their laptops appropriately will be counted as absent for the day. Repeated violation of this policy risks having laptop privileges revoked for the semester.

With few exceptions, **cell phones** and other small electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class. Text messaging is not permitted because it is distracting and disrespectful. Students who fail to follow this policy will be counted as absent for the day. If you need to leave your cell phone on due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., childcare, family emergencies, etc.), please arrange this with me at the start of the semester.

Communication

Email is the best way to get in contact with me outside of class time or office hours. Please email me directly at wmccconnell@fau.edu. Include “SYP 3740” in the subject line of all emails. I check my email regularly during working hours and on weekends. If I do not respond within 2 days, please email me again. Please do not message me through the Canvas messaging system – I check this much less frequently. Scheduled office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. These hours are meant to be a resource for you. If you cannot make scheduled office hours, please schedule an appointment by email.

Canvas

All supplemental readings, assignments, grades, and other course materials will be posted on the course website on Canvas. You will also turn in the majority of your assignments through Canvas, including written assignments. Additionally, I will send course updates, announcements, etc., using the Canvas messaging system, linked to your fau.edu email account. It is your responsibility to regularly check both Canvas and your FAU email.

Disability Policy Statement

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS)

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

Basic Needs Security

Some college students experience difficulties affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, lack a safe and stable place to live, or experience challenges balancing school work with paid work, childcare and other family obligations. These challenges can create anxiety and may also affect performance in the classroom. Students experiencing challenges are urged to contact the Dean of Students for support (561-297-3542; <http://www.fau.edu/studentsindistress/>). Students experiencing challenges with food, housing, work, and/or family obligations are also encouraged to notify the professor (wmccconnell@fau.edu) if they feel comfortable doing so. This will enable the professor to assist students in accessing support.

Tentative Course Schedule

All readings should be completed before class on the day they are listed. Readings other than the textbook will be posted on Canvas (CA) or linked online (WEB LINK). All audio assignments are available online and linked below. Films will be shown in class. (*Note: this schedule is tentative and I reserve the right to make changes during the semester.)

Part 1. Introduction to Aging Research

WEEK 1

1/11 **What does “Old Age” mean?**

No readings today!

1/13 **Introduction to Social Gerontology**

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 1

(CA) Read the short poems about aging before class

WEEK 2

1/18 **The Life-course Framework**

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 2 pages 26-39

(WEB LINK) Lifecourse Pod, “British Birth Cohort Studies” (9m audio)

1/20 **Cumulative Inequality**

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 2 pages 39-44

(CA) New York Times, “Rich People Don’t Just Live Longer...”

WEEK 3

1/25 **Demography of Aging**

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 4

(TEXT) Quadagno pages 242-243 (“Adding Years to Life or Life to Years?”)
(CA) Shaw, “Is the Ageing Population the Problem It is Made Out to Be?”

1/27

Biological Perspectives on Aging

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 6

([WEB LINK](#)) Harvard, “The Plasticity of the Aging Process” (38m audio)

Friday 1/28: Short Paper #1 due on Canvas

WEEK 4

2/1

Social Aspects of Aging: Micro Theories

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 3 pages 46-53

([WEB LINK](#)) Lifecourse Pod, “Can Cultural Engagement Stop Frailty?” (8m)

2/3

Social Aspects of Aging: Macro Theories

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 3 pages 56-67

([WEB LINK](#)) Pew, “Experience with COVID... for Americans of Different Ages”

Review the Exam #1 study guide before class

WEEK 5

2/8

EXAM #1 IN CLASS TODAY

2/10

Aging & Inequality Introduction

No readings today!

Part 2. Aging and Inequality

WEEK 6

2/15

Living Arrangements & Aging in Place

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 9

([WEB LINK](#)) Pew, “Where do the oldest Americans Live?”

([WEB LINK](#)) Grey Area Podcast, “The Little Old Lady Stays Put” (37m)

2/17

Work & Retirement

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 10

(CA) WSJ, Ekerdt, “In Defense of the Not-So-Busy Retirement”

([WEB LINK](#)) Lifecourse Pod, “Occupational Pensions and Social Class” (6m)

WEEK 7

2/22

The Economics of Aging

(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 14

- 2/24** **Gender & Aging**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 15 pages 334-347
([WEB LINK](#)) Forbes, “Age Discrimination: It’s Worse For Women”
([WEB LINK](#)) BBC, “Pain Bias: The Health Inequality Rarely Discussed”

WEEK 8

- 3/1** **Race, Ethnicity & Aging**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 15 pages 348-353
([WEB LINK](#)) Williams, “How Racism Makes Us Sick” (17m video)
(CA) Center for Retirement Research, “Trends in Retirement Security by Race/Ethnicity” [Skim and use reading guide]

- 3/3** **Sexuality & Aging**
(CA) Walz, “Crones, Dirty Old Men, Sexy Seniors”
(CA) New York Times, “Having ‘The Talk’ with my 80-Something Dad”
Friday 3/4: Short Paper #2 due on Canvas

WEEK 9 – SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10

- 3/15** **Elder Abuse & Exam Review**
Review the Exam #2 study guide before class

- 3/17** **EXAM #2 IN CLASS TODAY**

Part 3. Successful Aging, Disability, & Caregiving

WEEK 11

- 3/22** **Successful Aging**
(CA) Rowe & Kahn, “Successful Aging”
([WEB LINK](#)) BBC, “Japan: New Ways to Grow Old” (30m audio)

- 3/24** **Interview Project workshop**
Carefully read the Interview Project instructions before class

WEEK 12

- 3/29** **Informal Caregiving & Social Support**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 12 pages 260-270
([WEB LINK](#)) Gray Area Podcast, “The Caregiving Conundrum” (31m audio)
(CA) New York Times, “For Millennials, a Detour: To Caregiving”

- 3/31 Professional Caregiving**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 12 pages 270-284
(CA) Excerpts from *Making Gray Gold* by Timothy Diamond
Reminder: Did you complete your interview yet?

WEEK 13

- 4/5 Mental Health**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 7 pages 153-158
([WEB LINK](#)) Gray Area Podcast, "Life Outside the Lines" (37m)
([WEB LINK](#)) Botek, "Combating the Epidemic of Loneliness in Seniors"
- 4/7 Disability**
(CA) "I Felt this Rage" & "We Are Less" in *Tales from the Periphery* (9pg)
Friday 4/8 @11:59 PM: Interview Data & Summary due on Canvas

Part 4. Death and Bereavement

WEEK 14

- 4/12 Death & Dying**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 13 pages 288-294
([WEB LINK](#)) Kaufman, "A Sociology of My Death"
- 4/14 Hospice Care & Assisted Suicide**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 13 pages 294-301
(CA) Reading on the Euthanasia debate
([WEB LINK](#)) The Guardian, "Assisted Suicides in the Netherlands"
Friday 4/15 @11:59 PM: Interview Project Report due on Canvas

WEEK 15

- 4/19 Grief & Bereavement**
(TEXT) Quadagno Chapter 13 pages 301-307
(CA) HDSA, "Five Stages of Grief" summary sheet
([WEB LINK](#)) McVean, "It's Time To Let the Five Stages of Grief Die"
- 4/21 Funeral for the Course**
SPOT evaluations due this week
Review the Exam #3 study guide before class

Exam #3, 4/28 @7:45-10:15AM in the usual classroom

You MUST take your Final Exam on this date.
Please make any arrangements to travel AFTER the exam date.