

## **Sociology of Life Course(s)**

Spring 2015

SOCY 4131-002

**Instructors:** Glenda Walden

**Office Hours for Glenda:** Tues and Thurs 3:30-4:30 , Friday 2-3pm, and by appt

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### **Course description**

Over the next fifteen weeks we will be diving into human behavior through the lens of life course paradigms. This perspective emphasizes the historical context in which human lives are embedded and shaped by, the choices and actions that individuals make and take to construct their lives within the context of social and historical constraints, the interconnectedness of life domains such as health, education, work, family, and social background (demographics), and the importance of timing of life events within a person's lifespan and within a particular social context. As this field is interdisciplinary by nature, we will be incorporating history, psychology, demography, and even some basic human biology into our overarching sociological understanding of aspects of human life such as educational and occupational attainment, financial stability, marital and fertility patterns, family roles, self-esteem, deviance, health and mortality, and major transitions. As in any Sociology course you will be encouraged to examine your own perspective and experiences as part of larger social trends, embedded in social context and influence, and by "looking behind the curtain" of conventional knowledge about "the way things/people just are" to what else might be at work in the social environment. In addition, most sociological studies emphasize a snapshot or here and now take on social phenomena, while the life course perspective looks at trends in human behavior and conditions over an entire life span and even generations.

### **Course goals and opportunities**

- This course will introduce you to concepts, ideas, and theories within a life course framework for understanding human conditions and behavior. You will gain familiarity with the key concepts and theories through some original sources and popular writings and explore how these have been illustrated in contemporary research and media.
- You will develop the capacity to see how these perspectives and ideas show up in everyday life and how they can be utilized as you make sense of your surroundings, relationships, and choices you face.
- You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of course material and get feedback regarding your level of understanding and communication of such according to academic standards through class participation, group projects, papers, and exams. This also gives you some practice developing skills that will support your success in other academic and professional pursuits.

### **Course Materials (required)**

Required readings are available on D2Learn in folders by week.

### **Course Policies and Environment:**

- When you email me please use Socy 4131 as your subject header. I delete or don't respond to emails that do not have this as the subject heading. I check email throughout the day Monday through Friday till 4pm. If you email after this time, you can expect a response by the next work day.
- You are responsible for material and announcements presented during all lectures and recitation meetings. It is your responsibility to get missed notes and updates from fellow students-NOT the instructor. If a due date or other administrative changes are announced, that will supersede the "tentative schedule" found in this syllabus.
- Please do not arrive late or leave early or begin to pack up prior to the end of lecture or discussion. This inhibits other students' ability to hear and understand the material.
- Please turn off cell phone ringers, and avoid engaging in side talking, reading, sleeping, texting, or surfing while in class. This is disrespectful of other students and the instructors and disruptive to the learning community. If I notice you doing any of these things the possible reactions range from polite requests to cease to light public ridd2Le to being asked to leave the room.

- Please do the assigned readings for the week before first class or recitation meeting of the week. This makes class more enjoyable for everyone and more useful for you. Many of the readings come from scholarly journals and books, and you may find them more difficult than textbooks and other sources. They require time and focused attention for deep comprehension and retention. While we may not cover each reading in class you are responsible for the content. If something is unclear in the reading or you are unsure how it relates to that week's topic, it is your responsibility to bring that question up in class if you want it discussed in more detail.
- No early or late exams will be given. If you know you will be unable to take an exam on the day scheduled for any reason (religious, university event, or any other reason), please let us know as soon as possible to arrange for the essay makeup or other alternative. If you miss an exam, you have 24 hours to inform your instructor and then you will be given a take-home essay exam that typically takes 8-10 hours to complete. If you do not inform your instructor within 24 hours of missing an exam you will be given a zero for that score. It is in your best interest to be at scheduled exams. Please check the syllabus now to determine if there are any conflicts you need to discuss with me.
- Late papers are not accepted. That is the official policy. Please plan your life accordingly. I have been known to make exceptions to this policy for out of the ordinary circumstances (more sympathetic in advance), but only with point penalties.
- If you have any schedule conflicts with the final exam, please let your instructor know as soon as possible. If you have time conflicts with other tests, due dates, or known absences let your instructor know by e-mail as soon as possible.
- If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: [303-492-8671](tel:303-492-8671), Center for Community N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.
- If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see guidelines at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html>
- Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you will be offered a take-home essay due after religious observances are over or given extension of due date for religious observances. The take-home essay is designed to be completed in the amount of time I feel is necessary to study for and complete the in class exam. See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)
- Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)
- The University of Colorado at Boulder Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, the University of Colorado Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships policy apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at [303-492-2127](tel:303-492-2127) or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at [303-492-5550](tel:303-492-5550).

Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

- All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>
- Please keep all returned exams (and other returned work) in the event that you have a grade dispute at the end of the semester. If your calculation of your grade does not match our records, it is your responsibility to provide proof of graded work.

**Evaluation Components**

We will discuss this in further detail in the first week of class, but here is the foundation on which we will collectively create assignments, test formats, and activities.

In class attendance:	15 points
Discussion facilitations:	25 points
Papers:	150 points
Exams:	200 points

This gives a total of 390 points.

**Final Grade Scale**

A: 93-100%	B: 83-86%	C: 73-76%	D: 63-66%
A-: 90-92%	B-: 80-82%	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62%
B+: 87-89%	C+: 77-79%	D+: 67-69	F: 59% or less

**In class attendance** points will be partially decided by attendance and engagement in class discussions and participation in classroom activities. You can't get the points if you aren't in the room, prepared, reading done, questions in mind, and ready to roll. You may also be called upon to provide discussion questions based upon readings and class material. These will be submitted in class, selected, and presented by the student either the same or the following class meeting. 15 pts

**Discussion Facilitation** Almost every class there will be a bit of time set aside for presenting the key ideas of that week's readings, facilitating a discussion, and connecting those ideas with other course material, current events, popular media, and/or important issues in the lives of students. You may also be called upon to provide discussion questions based upon readings and class material. These will be submitted in class, selected, and presented by the student either the same or the following class meeting. I will draw names at random and ask for your lead with a question, observation or topic of discussion, etc. If you are not prepared you may "pass" once, if you are absent the day you are called on, that counts as your "pass." This makes it in your best interest to be current and prepared with readings. 25 pts

**Papers**-Two papers worth 150 points will be due (75 pts each), I have quite a few topics and am open to you exploring your own ideas in depth as well, so if you don't see something that interests you, propose something.

**Exams**--Two exams worth 75 points each and a final exam worth 50 points gives a total of 200 points toward your final grade. All exams are take-home essay format. The prompts will be posted no less than 2 weeks before they are due.

## Course Schedule notes

- Of course this schedule is subject to change.
- Due dates for exams and papers on syllabus are tentative. Any changes to this will be announced in class, so do check in on that frequently.
- Required readings posted online are listed as **D2L** by
- Please complete each week's readings before first class of each week.

## Tentative Course Schedule

<b>Week One 1/13</b>	Course Introduction and context Reading: D2L week one
<b>Week Two 1/20</b>	The importance of historical context and birth cohort Reading: D2L week 2
<b>Week Three 1/27</b>	Terms: Timing, Trajectories, Transitions Reading: D2L week 3
<b>Week Four 2/3</b>	Agency and Constraint Reading: D2L week 4
<b>Week Five 2/10</b>	Linked Lives and childhood Reading: D2L week 5
<b>Week Six 2/17</b>	Adolescence Reading: D2L week 6 <b>Test One due in class Thursday 2/19</b>
<b>Week Seven 2/24</b>	Emerging Adulthood: Education, identity, etc Reading: D2L week 7
<b>Week Eight 3/3</b>	Emerging adulthood: career, relationships Reading: D2L week 8 <b>Paper One due in class Tuesday, 3/3</b>
<b>Week Nine 3/10</b>	Young adulthood: Big choices Reading: D2L week 9
<b>Week Ten 3/17</b>	Young to middle adulthood: Relationships and parenting Reading: D2L week 10
<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>Week Eleven 3/31</b>	Middle Age: transitions-letting go and getting out (or tossed out) Reading: D2L week 11
<b>Week Twelve 4/7</b>	Middle age to old age: gendered, classed, and raced aging Reading: D2L week 12 <b>Exam 2 due in class Thursday 4/9</b>
<b>Week Thirteen 4/14</b>	Old Age to Very Old Age Reading: D2L week 13 and posted weblinks
<b>Week Fourteen 4/21</b>	Dying (Yep, your own death. Way to end on a high note.) Reading: D2L week 14 <b>Paper 2 due in class Thursday 4/23</b>
<b>Week Fifteen 4/28</b>	Tying it together, what does it all mean, wrap up
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>TBA</b>