

The University of Georgia

Sociology 4660

Sociology of the Life Course

Tu/Th 2:00-3:15, Psychology Bldg., Room 426

Instructor:	Dr. Joseph C. Hermanowicz	Term:	Spring, 2009
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Purpose:

This course provides an overview of work that defines the sociological study of lives, which is broadly concerned with the paths and turning points that socially situate individual lives. We will focus on a number of topics that ground life course analysis as a specialized area of inquiry within the larger sociological discipline, including: socialization over the life course; methods for the sociological study of lives; the cultural construction of the life course; age norms; the stratification of lives; education, work and the life course; deviance and the life course; health and the life course.

Format:

The format of the course will be combination lecture and discussion. There will also be films and a semester-long independent research project in which each student will conduct a comparative study of two people's accounts of their life story.

Readings:

The required readings for the course are listed on the course schedule. They are available by two means:

- 1) UGA electronic course reserves: <http://gil.uga.edu/> The password is: **studylife**
- 2) Course packet available for purchase at Bel-Jean.

WebCT Page:

This course has a WebCT page containing copies of important course materials. If you do not already have a "MyID" account, establish one for access to the course page.

Requirements:

1. Reading, which includes the set of distributed questions. You are responsible for preparing responses/answers to these questions in advance of the class meeting for which they are assigned. You should bring to class the reading assigned for that day's class along with your completed questions.
2. Term Research Project, which will involve conducting two life story interviews with respondents of your choice; participating in discussions over the course of the term about your research-in-progress and reporting your progress to the class; a 15 pp. research paper (exclusive of supplementary materials, appendices, protocols, etc.) presenting, analyzing, and interpreting your results. (See special handout).

The Research Project includes the mid-semester submission of an interview protocol and interview tapes—due dates listed on the course schedule. Credit for the interview protocol and tapes will be given only if they are submitted in hard copy on or before the listed due dates.

Policy on late papers: The due date, time, and place for paper submission is listed on the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted.

3. Four in-class exams. The exams will cover all of the reading assignments; lectures; class discussions; and films up to the date of the exam. Exam format is true/false and multiple choice. All of the exams are non-cumulative.

Make-Up Exam Policy: If you miss an exam, you are required to take a make-up exam. All make-up exams are given at one universal time: any and all make-up exams will immediately follow Exam IV, the date of which is listed on the syllabus.

4. Five quizzes. There will be five quizzes at random points throughout the semester. The quizzes will be short (normally a few questions) and will be based strictly on the assigned questions for that day. The quizzes will consist of questions found word-for-word on the reading/film questions.

Quiz Policy: Quizzes will usually be given during the first 10 minutes of class. Because they are random, there are no make-ups. The lowest quiz score will be dropped, resulting in the four top quizzes counted toward the final grade.

Grades:

Each of the above requirements will count as follows toward the final course grade:

Term Research Project:	100 pts.
Mid-Semester Interview Protocol:	5 pts.
Mid-Semester Interview Tapes:	5 pts.
Quizzes (best 4 out of 5):	5 pts. X 4 = 20 pts.
<u>Exams:</u>	<u>50 pts. X 4 = 200 pts.</u>
Total:	330 pts.

Your final grade is based on the point totals below. There is no rounding.

307-330 pts. = A
297-306 pts. = A-
291-296 pts. = B+
274-290 pts. = B
264-273 pts. = B-
258-263 pts. = C+
241-257 pts. = C
231-240 pts. = C-
198-230 pts. = D
0-197 pts. = F

Attendance Policy:

- Attendance is taken everyday by signing your name on the class roster.
- It is each student's responsibility to sign their names on the list each day.
- Students who miss more than four classes will be administratively withdrawn.
- No distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences: if you are not present, you are absent.
- If you leave before the end of a class, you forfeit attendance and any quiz that day.
- Signing-in a name other than your own is lying, a violation of the Academic Honesty policy—see below.
- This policy applies to all students.

Missed Classes/Films:

Students for whom an absence is unavoidable bear the responsibility of getting missed notes from another student. This also applies to notes on films scheduled for the course. The films are not available for loan on an individual basis.

Religious Holidays:

During the semester, class may fall on one or more holidays celebrated by a variety of religious or other groups. Unless the University closes on those days, absences will be counted. If you anticipate such days, plan accordingly and allocate an allotted absence for them.

Extra Credit:

There is no extra credit in the course.

Honors Option:

There is no honors option for the course.

Disability:

Students with a documented disability who would like to request permissible accommodations must see the instructor after class or at an appointment. The disability must be documented by the University's Office of Student Affairs or its Disabilities Division.

Incompletes:

The grade of "Incomplete" will not be given except under the most serious and highly unusual circumstances. These circumstances will require documentation sent to the Instructor by the University's Office of Student Affairs and will be made solely at the Instructor's discretion.

Withdrawals:

Withdrawals that occur before to the withdrawal point of the semester—including administrative withdrawals for non-attendance—will receive the grade of WP, if and only if a student has not reached the withdrawal maximum of 4. If a student has exceeded the withdrawal maximum, the University automatically will assign the grade of WF. In accordance with University policy, withdrawals that occur after the withdrawal point of the semester—including administrative withdrawals for non-attendance—will receive the grade of WF.

General Classroom Etiquette:

The functioning of a class depends upon everyone's cooperation and courtesy.

- Take care of all necessary business before coming to the classroom. Unless it is an emergency, refrain from exiting and entering the room once class has begun—this is distracting to other students and the instructor.
- Avoid private conversations during lecture—this is disruptive to others taking notes.
- Be certain to turn off cell phones and watches that are distracting to others.
- Overall, treat other students in the class and the instructor in ways you would like to be treated by them.

Academic Honesty:

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Ignorance of these policies is not an acceptable defense against violations of them. "A Culture of Honesty" and materials related to University policies governing academic work, including the disciplinary actions that will automatically be taken if a student violates academic honesty policies, may be found at:

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Grievances:

The Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at the University who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

- 1) The student should discuss his or her problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit such discussion.
- 2) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Sociology Department.
- 3) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the student's satisfaction, the student may request the activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chair of the Committee.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with procedures on file in the Sociology Department, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student and instructor. The Department Head will review the recommendations, and make a decision, in writing, with copies to the student and instructor. Any appeal of that decision must be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Course Schedule

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course;
deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Jan. 8: Introduction

Jan. 13: Film: Seasons of Life—Early Adulthood: 20-40.

Jan. 15: Development of the Life Course as Field of Sociological Inquiry

O’Rand, Angela M. and Margaret L. Krecker. 1990. “Concepts of the Life Cycle: Their History, Meanings, and Uses in the Social Sciences.” Annual Review of Sociology 16:241-262.

**Term Projects: Overview & Discussion

Jan. 20: Life Phases—I

Erikson, Erik H. 1982. “Major Stages in Psychosocial Development.” In The Life Cycle Completed: A Review, 55-82. New York: W.W. Norton.

Jan. 22: Life Phases—II

Levinson, Daniel J. 1978. “The Novice Phase: The Early Adult Transition, Entering the Adult World and the Age Thirty Transition” and “The Life of James Tracy, Executive.” In Seasons of a Man’s Life, 71-89; 112-125. New York: Ballantine.

Jan. 27: Life Phases—III

Levinson, Daniel. 1996. “Age 30 Transition: Homemakers,” “Age 30 Transition: Career Women.” In Seasons of a Woman’s Life, 117-141; 296-333. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Jan. 29: Age Norms

Roth, Julius. 1963. “Some Other Career Timetables.” In Timetables, 63-92. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Feb. 3: Exam I

Feb. 5: Ceremonial Designations of the Life Span: Death

Nuland, Sherwin B. 1994. "Alzheimer's Disease." In How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter, 89-117. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Feb. 10: Film: Pop

Feb. 12: Methods of Life Course Research

Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." Qualitative Sociology 25: 479-499.

Feb. 17: Methodological Considerations in Life Course Research

Clausen, John A. 1998. "Life Reviews and Life Stories." In Janet Z. Giele and Glen H. Elder, Jr. (eds.), Methods of Life Course Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, 189-212. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Feb. 19 The Ethics of Life Course Research

What are the necessary precautions we must take in social research?

Feb. 24: **Interview Protocol Due**

Your Interview Questions: Today's class is devoted to discussing the set of interview questions you have developed for your term research project.

- Construct your own, complete list of organized interview questions.
- Identify your three most important questions, why they are important, and what you might expect to find in asking them.
- Remember on your protocol to include the following, as covered in the last reading and the last lecture:
 - 20-30 main questions
 - Topical Headings
 - Probe Questions
 - Written Introduction for Interviewees (3 ingredients)

- Turn in a type-written copy of your interview protocol at the end of class.
- Submit your protocol in hard copy only—no e-mail submissions.

Feb. 26: Exam II

Mar. 3: Age and Social Stratification

Modell, John. 1989. "The Changing Life Course of America's Youth." In Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975, 35-66. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mar. 5: Film: 28 Up, Part I

Mar. 17: Film: 28 Up, Part II

Mar. 19: Lives Through the Years: Studying 28 Up as Life Course Sociology

Mar. 24 & 26: Term Projects: Fieldwork Interviewing/No Class

Mar. 31: Term Projects: What makes a great paper?

Interview Tapes Due:

Turn-in your interview tapes, labeled with your name on them.

Apr. 2: Film: 42 Up, Part I

Apr. 7: Film: 42 Up, Part II

Apr. 9: Exam III

Apr. 14: Health and the Life Course

George, Linda K., David B. Larson, Harold G. Koenig, and Michael E. McCullough. 2000. "Spirituality and Health: What We Know, What We Need to Know." Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 19: 102-116.

Apr. 16: Crime and the Life Course

Laub, John H. and Robert J. Sampson. 2003. "Why Some Offenders Persist." Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70, 150-195. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Apr. 21: Education, Work and the Life Course

Harrington, Charles C. and Susan K. Boardman. 1997. "Work and Careers." In Paths to Success: Beating the Odds in American Society, 96-123. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Apr. 23: **Exam IV**

Apr. 28: Make-up Day/Course Conclusion

**May 5: Term Research Papers Due—Follow Checklist on Handout
Deliver Project Materials in Hard Copy To:
Baldwin Hall 324A (Instructor's Office)
No later than 5 p.m.**

May 11: All scores posted on WebCT by this date.
Papers may be picked-up now or next semester.