Depending on when during the week you email me, there will be 12-36 hour response turn-around. I check email once or twice a day, Monday-Friday between 9-5pm (and not at all on weekends).

COURSE INTRO

This interdisciplinary course will introduce students to the varied issues, concepts, representations, and challenges related to aging from the perspectives of American culture and scholarly literature. Texts are an eclectic mix of topics that aim to expand your awareness of the issues aging women. As we work our way through the texts, I invite you to pay attention to intersection of these ideas with contemporary films, magazines, TV ads and other cultural productions, as well as a range of scholarly literature.

This is an asynchronous online course. The following suggestions can help you successfully complete this 5-week course. In a nutshell,

1. Do not “forget” you signed up for this course. Yes, each summer session a couple of students show up the last week wanting to make up a whole semester’s work. No. No. No.

   *Personal responsibility is key to your learning success.*

2. To succeed in this class, you must own or have ready access to a computer and a working internet connection. You are also expected to know (or learn) how to use these technologies. It is NOT my role to provide technical support. You may access 24-hr Brightspace Chat from the course home page. ITS Service desk is also available virtually at [https://its.uri.edu](https://its.uri.edu). They will be able to answer your questions re: technology.

3. That said, technological problems are NOT a valid excuse for missing or late assignments.

4. Do not leave posting assignments to the last moment. Remember Murphy’s Law: if something can go wrong, it will. Have a back-up plan ready in case you encounter any technical difficulties during this course (like if your computer dies, you lose internet, etc).

5. Each week in a 5-week summer session is roughly equivalent to 2-1/2 weeks in a regular semester.

   If we met face-to-face this summer session, we would spend roughly 7-8 hours together in the classroom per week. This class is asynchronous and we will not meet online. Plan to spend an equivalent 7-8 hours assignments (reading-viewing texts, engaging in critical thinking, and writing assignments).
Personal responsibility is key to your learning success.

6. Take the time NOW to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the Brightspace course site and location of materials so you don’t waste time later figuring out where resources are and when assignments are due. Ignorance about when an assignment is due is NOT an acceptable excuse.

7. Brightspace Contents module contains Course Overview (syllabus of course policies) and the Schedule of Assignments with links to PSDs and videos. If video links sour and do not work, search for those videos in URI Library, AmazonPrimeVideo, or streaming on other websites.

8. Each week you have 7 days to engage assigned texts and write assignments. Do not wait until the last moment. Allow ample time to reflect on the material under study, prepare for and complete and post assignments on time. This is not rocket science. Simply, read, reflect, and articulate clearly (on time) what you have learned.

9. Late work is not accepted. In a tightly scheduled 5-week semester, there is no time to make-up work. Plan ahead. If possible, it’s a good idea to work a bit ahead of schedule.

   Last minute technological glitches are NOT an excuse for late or missed work. Allow yourself time for any errors you make and/or transmission problems that crop up. Do not wait until the last minute to take quizzes or post your essays. Brightspace will lock you out whether you try to post 30 seconds or 5 minutes after the deadline and you will lose that assignment grade.

   That said, if you have a legitimate, documented, URI-approved excuse for lateness do not hesitate to email me your documentation.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What are course objectives?

By the end of the course you should be able to knowledgeably:

1. Discuss problems and issues contemporary American women face as they age
2. Identify myths and facts about women and aging
3. Understand feminist gerontology as opposed to other theories of aging
4. Analyze contemporary cultural productions about aging
5. Develop a feminist approach to issues of aging (yours or someone you know)
COURSE FORMAT

What texts will we use?

Each week you will read roughly 100 pages of print and view a video roughly 85 minutes long. Print texts and video links are located in Brightspace’s Content tool. Links to online videos are also in the Assignment Schedule.

How are the materials we study structured and scheduled?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit I</td>
<td>Ageism/ Feminist Theory / Popular Culture &amp; Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit II</td>
<td>Diverse Ways of Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit III</td>
<td>Economics of Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units IV</td>
<td>Health &amp; Reproductive Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit V</td>
<td>Aging Women’s Voices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What rules apply to the way we work in the course?

Students are expected to be respectful of one another (and the professor) whether online or in face-to-face interactions. Remember, online communications in this course are not anonymous and are readily seen by your class colleagues and instructor. You want to make a good impression.

*Read and Paraphrase.* Always. I look for engagement with the ideas in assigned texts. Read/view assigned material closely, taking good notes (sometimes writing your thoughts in the margins of copy). *Studies show highlighting passages you think are important is not an efficient approach to learning through reading.*

*Tips on Notetaking.* The best way to take notes is to read a passage and then paraphrase it in your own words. (Paraphrasing helps avoid plagiarism in writing.) After reading, you should have a good grasp on the “who, what, when, and where” of the questions I ask you to consider for your reflections/essays.

Review your notes the day after you take them and at the end of the week to help reinforce key ideas and topics. Clarify ideas or data that is unclear in your notes. Rakhi loves his little gray stuffed elephant.

Remember, regardless of what you “feel” or “believe,” as a scholar you must support your assertions with evidence. If you make an argument, be sure to support it with credible data. Use specific examples from course texts to back up your ideas.

If you think you have a disability and need help reading and taking notes, I recommend you contact Disability Services for assistance. Sooner is always better.

*Analyze*

After you have good understanding of assigned text, you will be ready to analyze it and answer the “how” and “why” questions raised by the material. For example, you should be able to identify cause and effect for various historical and cultural phenomena. Assigned texts range across the past 40 years to give you a sense of the development of this field of study. The represent the salient interests and approaches to research and theory about aging women (60+ years). Be aware of when each piece is published to find a rough chronology of interest / development.
Some articles ground research from other parts of the world and I ask you to consider (compare and contrast) women aging across geographical and temporal boundaries. For scholars, there are no simple or linear answers to “cause and effect” / “compare and contrast.” I encourage you to think creatively and consider a wide range of approaches in your reflective discussions.

Learning is a process. Reading / viewing texts on time, taking reliable notes, and good communication will be the strongest contributors to your success in this course. I look for you to engage assigned texts in reflections and essays. Use specific examples from course texts to back up your ideas. At the most advanced level of learning, you will synthesize what you learn from week to week as you evaluate varied texts and analyses.

Remember, regardless of what you “feel” or “believe,” as a scholar you must support your assertions with evidence. So, if you make an argument, be sure to support it with credible data / theory.

**What are technological requirements?**

*Basic Technical Requirements:* To succeed in this class, you must own or have ready access to a computer with a working internet connection and computer email account. You are also expected to know how to use these technologies. It is NOT the instructor's role to provide technical support.

If you need help with the Brightspace website technology *(i.e., maneuvering the course website)*, please contact URI's Help Desk. The 24-hour help-chat is a click away from your Brightspace home page.

**Technological problems are not excuses for late and/or missing assignments.** I recommend you have a back-up plan in case you encounter technical difficulties during this course.

- If a hyperlink does not work when you click it, copy and paste the address into the URL of your browser.
- If you are unable to open a document in the Resources folder, find the article or video via in URI Library’s databases. Videos can also be found elsewhere online including AmazonPrime.

**What texts are required for reading / viewing / listening?**

This is a reading-intensive 300-level course. Each week assigned texts will be roughly 80-100 pages (some weeks a little more, others a little less). Plan ahead so you can manage the reading load. Texts for this course are found in the Brightspace Content tool (below each week’s schedule).

Text assignments are required reading/viewing. All texts are available online so there is no excuse for not having them at any point in this semester.

**What is the assignments policy?**

*Course policies, assignment schedules and directions for assignments are posted in the Contents tool.* Carefully read and follow the directions for each assignment.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED. None. Do not email me assignments because you missed a deadline. I only accept work submitted via Brightspace. Do not wait until the last possible moment to
As Murphy’s Law posits: “If something can go wrong, it will.” Allow yourself enough time to deal with any last minute problems that may crop up.

You have ample time to post your weekly assignments (7 days). If you try to post thirty seconds or an hour late, Brightspace will lock you out and you will forfeit a grade. This rule applies to ALL assignments.

That said, if you have a documented legitimate reason (e.g., hospitalization, death), we can arrange a reasonable extension... and Rakhi loves his gray stuffed elephant.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Having someone else do your work or using someone else's work, words, or ideas without giving them proper credit are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to University regulations. You can be expelled for cheating.

Even if you think you know what plagiarism is, take a moment to consider the following definition:

*plagiarism*

n 1: a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work; 2: the act of plagiarizing; taking someone’s words or ideas as if they were your own.


URI's College of Business Administration published the following to help students understand what plagiarism is. "[What Is Plagiarism?](#)

You can also refer to the University of Rhode Island Manual, "Academic Regulations" (Chapter 8), and the University of Rhode Island Student Handbook: Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations. In this class, cheating and plagiarizing is not acceptable and will be punished according to university rules and regulations.

**EVALUATION**

**How will your final grade be calculated?**

There are 900 assignment points available in this course.

Personal Introduction and Miss-Communication 40 pts
History of Plagiarism Discussion 60 pts
Weekly Reflections 500 pts (5 @ 100 pts each)
Mini-Essay 100 pts
Mid-Term Research Report 100 pts
Final Research Report 100 pts
At the end of the semester, I simply total the number of points you earned for each assignment and divide by 900.

A- = 90-93; A = 94 +; B- = 80-83; B = 84-86; B+ = 87-89; C- = 70-73; C = 74-76; C+ = 77-79; D- = 60-63; D = 63-66; D+ = 77-79; F = 59 and below

If you have questions about a grade, first compare your work with the grading rubric for that particular assignment. If you want to make a case for a higher grade, submit a written explanation to me (using Sakai’s Private Message Tool). Clearly state the reasons you think your grade should be different. Include specific examples from texts for that assignment to support your argument. (Your reason must have more to do with merit than “I need an A to graduate.”)

After a review of your work and argument, I reserve the right to raise, lower or keep your grade the same.
SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Texts for this class are printed, visual and audio files that are available via link in schedules or stored in Brightspace’s Content tool. If the hyperlink does not work, you are welcome to take initiative to find them elsewhere.

UNIT I: AGEISM / FEMINIST THEORY / POPULAR CULTURE & AGING
Week 1 (May 23—May 29)

Read:

• Toni M. Calasanti, “Introduction,” in Toni M. Calasanti and Kathleen F. Slevin, eds., Age Matters: Realigning Feminist Thinking, pp. 2-16 (14pp)


• Chetna Narayan, “Is There a Double Standard of Aging?” Older Men and Women and Ageism,” Educational Gerontology, 782-787, 2008 (5pp)


• Susan Sontag, “The Double Standard of Aging,” (14pp)


Watch Video:

• Living Old (Frontline, 2006), 54 mins. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/livingold/

Assignments:

-> Due before 11pm, Wednesday, June 30: Personal Introduction / Miss-Commputernication (40pts), “History of Plagiarism” response (60pts). Post Intros to Discussion tool and post Plagiarism response to Assignments tool.

  • For 5 (five) extra points, who loves the little gray mouse? This is your ONLY extra credit opportunity.
Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 4: Reflections #1 on assigned texts (100pts). 600-750 words. Using the feminist perspective on aging (as presented in this week’s required texts), answer the questions below as you compare/contrast/draw connections among the texts. Use the author’s analyses as guides for discussing your own conclusions.

1. What is a feminist perspective of aging?
2. Overall what do these texts tell us about women and aging?
3. How specifically are these author’s theses and the issues they consider interrelated? (e.g., What are connections between popular culture and ageism?)
4. What specific insights do we gain by looking at these texts together this week?
5. How might an intersectional perspective (using the lens of race/class/gender) help us to see aging more clearly?
6. How does or might a feminist perspective affect cultural perceptions of aging?
UNIT II: DIVERSE WAYS OF AGING
Week 2 (May 30-June 5)

Read Texts:


• Dan Buettner, “The Sardinian Blue Zone,” *The Blue Zones*, pp. 67-119 (52pp)


• Priscilla Frank, “15 Badass Art World Heroines Over 70 Years Old,” *Huffington Post*, 01/08/2015 (updated 08/02/2016) [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/08/female-artists-over-70_n_6424730.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/08/female-artists-over-70_n_6424730.html)


• Careen Yarnal, et al., “She was buried in her purple dress and her red hat and all of our members wore full ‘Red Hat Regalia’ to celebrate her life”: Dress, embodiment and older women’s leisure: Reconfiguring the ageing process,” *Journal of Aging Studies*, 25 (2011) 52–61 (9pp)

Watch Video:

• *Big Mama* (California Newsreel, 2000), 40 mins. [uri.kanopystreaming.com/video/big-mama-0](http://uri.kanopystreaming.com/video/big-mama-0) Available in URI Library Media Resources

Assignments:

• Reflections #2 (100pts): Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 11: 600-750 words. Using the feminist perspective of aging (found in Unit I texts), analyze Unit II texts. Be sure to answer the questions below as you use the author’s analyses as guides for discussing and presenting your own conclusions.

  1. Define “compression of morbidity.”
  3. What are the specific factors that enhance a long and healthy life?
4. How (in what specific ways) are some Americans trying to incorporate those factors into community, individual, school, and business life?

• Mini-Essay (100pts): Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 11: 400 words. Take the “True Happiness Compass” and “Vitality Compass” tests on the Blue Zones website. [https://apps.bluezones.com/en/vitality](https://apps.bluezones.com/en/vitality) Think about the results keeping in mind the analysis offered in this week’s texts. Post your response to the Assignments tool.
UNIT III: ECONOMICS OF AGING
Week 3 (June 6-12)

Read Texts:


• Lupe Solis, “Reform Critical for Latinas,” Hispanic, 14(Jan/Feb 2001): 102 (1pg)

Watch Video:


Assignments:

• Reflections #3 (100pts): Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 18:

600-750 words. Using the feminist perspective of aging found in Week 1 texts, analyze Unit II texts. Be sure to answer the questions posed as you use the author’s analyses as guides for discussing and presenting your own conclusions.

Stereotypes of the elderly are “greedy geezers” who vacation on cruises, play golf and eat gourmet dinners, Walmart greeters or “the people who bag groceries.” The reality is, of course, somewhat more complex.

1. What economic problems (or advantages) do women of color face in the aging process?
2. In what ways are those problems or advantages skewed by race and class?
3. Retirement is a relatively new phase of life (another transition), made possible chiefly through pensions and Social Security. What issues does retirement raise in terms of economics and quality of life?
Midterm Research Report (100pts): Due in Assignments Tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 18:

600-750 words. Look for 6-8 articles about women and aging / Social Security / retirement (or working past retirement age) that were published in newspapers and popular magazines between 2007-2021 (no blogs or opinion pieces). The New York Times, Washington Post are good sources that combine scholarly research and anecdotal reporting. Compare/contrast the ideas in course texts to options generally available to women and the coverage in the media. Be sure to answer the questions posed as you use the author’s analyses as guides for discussing and presenting your own conclusions.

1. Each year, do the articles address the same issues? Is there a chronology to scholars’ interest in particular issues?
2. From what vantage point do they look at aging?
3. What did they add to or leave out of what you’ve learned thus far?

Include citations for sources at the end of your commentary (not on a separate page). For format, look at Kate Turabian’s Style Manual (found online and/or in reference section of any library).
UNIT IV: HEALTH & REPRODUCTIVE AGING
Week 4 (June 13-19)

Read Texts:

• Heather E. Dillaway, “Menopause is the “Good Old”: Women’s Thoughts about Reproductive Aging,” I, 19(no. 3, June 2005): 398-417 (21pp)

• Will Dunham, “Healthy lifestyle triggers genetic changes: study,” Reuters (June 16, 2007, 9:21pm ET) (1 pg)


• “Introduction,” “Aging is Not A Disease,” and “Women’s Health and the Medical Care System,” from Our Bodies, Ourselves website (5pp) http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/publications/ogoex.asp

• “Japanese women, Icelandic men world’s longest-lived,” Reuters (July 26, 2007, 9:33am ET) (1 pg)

Assignments:

• Reflections #4 (100pts): Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Sunday, July 25:

600-750 words. Use analyses in Unit IV texts as guide for your discussion. How would you use the paradigms presented in the texts you’ve read and viewed this semester to discuss this week’s assigned texts?

Create three (3) of your own questions for analysis. Be sure to state what your questions are with your responses.
UNIT V: AGING WOMEN’S VOICES  
Week 5 (June 20-24)

Read Texts:

• Sondra M. Brandler, “Aged Mothers, Aging Daughters,” *NWSA Journal*, vol. 10, (no.1, Spring 1998), pp. 4-56 (11pp)


• Valerie Barnes Lipscomb, ”’We need a theoretical base’: Cynthia Rich, women's studies, and ageism,” *NWSA Journal*, vol. 18(no. 1, Spring 2006): p. (7pp)


Assignments:

• Reflections #5 (100pts): Due in Assignments tool before 11pm, Friday, July 30

600-750 words. Use analyses in Unit V texts as guide for your discussion. How would you use the paradigms presented in the texts you’ve read and viewed this semester to discuss this week’s assigned texts?

Create three (3) of your own questions for analysis. Be sure to state what your questions are with your responses.

FINAL ESSAY: due in Assignments Tool before 11pm, Friday, July 30. (100 points)

Directions for final essay are in the Contents tool.