COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The aim of this course is to scrutinize major sociological approaches to the study of the human life course. Several distinct, albeit related, classes of phenomena have been studied in the life course area: individual outcomes; population-level patterns, and symbolic outcomes. This course will review critically the basic questions, the basic assumptions, and exemplars of work dealing with each of these types of life-course phenomena. We will pay particular attention to the kinds of explanations proposed for these phenomena, and the role of theory in shaping our practical as well as intellectual understanding of these phenomena. Theoretical approaches reviewed will include age stratification, the life course approach, life-span psychology, and constructivist and critical approaches to the life course, which will explore the role of institutional structures and micro-social processes in shaping and defining the life course. Each student will engage in an exploratory research project, conducting life history interviews with at least two people.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

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REQUIRED ARTICLES: Will be posted on BlackBoard (in the following BB)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Life history interviews: The life history project requires interviewing two respondents of approximately the same age, and then prepare a report that links your interview findings to one or more social science concepts presented in the course, or possibly in other coursework. It is recommended that respondents be age 30 or older, and of the same gender. The report will be presented in class and submitted as a finished paper. (25 points)

2. A class presentation (10 minutes) of your life history interviews. Presentations will take place during the last two weeks of class. (15 points)

3. A take-home essay mid-term exam (due week of February 29). (25 points)

4. A final paper on a topic of your own choosing, to be defined in consultation with the instructor. For graduate students, this paper must provide a critical discussion of theory and methods of at least three research articles. Due date TBA (finals week). (35 points)
   *Undergrad students can achieve 100p max

Graduate Students Only:
5. In addition to the above requirements, each graduate student will choose one reading or set of readings the syllabus to provide the basis for a class presentation (10-20 minutes). Grad students must sign up for the material they will present by the 4th week of class. This presentation should not be a summary of the material. Rather, the material should be used as a point of departure for your reactions. These reactions may include criticisms, linkages to concepts or readings previously discussed in class (or in other classes), what you liked or found compelling about the material, theoretical or methodological considerations, etc. As part of this presentation, please be prepared to pose thoughtful questions to the class and to encourage class discussion. (20 points)

CALENDAR:

January 14    Age, Period, Cohort: Strategies of Empirical Analysis
Holstein, & Gubrium, Ch. 1 (BB- H & G readings are only posted in first week; please check bookstore or books)
Riley, Johnson, & Foner (1972) (BB)
Also Recommended:

January 21    No class: University Holiday

January 28    The Dominant Approach: Explaining Individual Outcomes through Personhood

Also Recommended:

**February 4**  
First Principles: Human Requisites of Development and their Social Concomitants


Mead, Margaret (1963). *Sex and temperament in three primitive societies*. “The Tchambuli” (BB)


Holstein and Gubrium, Ch. 2

Also recommended:

**February 11**  
Individual Outcomes Revisited: The Structure of Action and the Action of Structure

PRESENTED BY: JACQUELIN ARENDT

Holstein & Gubrium, Chs. 4-5


Also recommended:

**February 18**  
From Theory to Practice: Applying Alternative Interpretations of Lived Experience And Introduction to Life History Interviews

PRESENTED BY: SCOTT ADAMS


**February 25**  
The Life-course Patterns of a Population: Personological & Sociological Approaches


PRESENTED BY: ALISON CARLSON


March 3 Age Norms and Ideologies of the Life Course


PRESENTED BY: TERRANCE RICHARDSON


March 10 Spring Break

March 17 Theory and Ideology of the Life Course


PRESENTED BY: MELINDA LAROCO

Also recommended:


March 24 Life Course Theory and Applications, Childhood and Adolescence

Dornbusch, S.M. *Norms for Thinness among Adolescent Females.* (paper delivered at annual meeting of ASA, 1986). (BB)


PRESENTED BY: EMILY FLEISHER

March 31  Life Course Theory, Childhood and Adolescence (cont.)
PRESENTED BY: HILLARY MELCHIORS

April 7 Life Course Theory and ‘Adulthood’
Chudacoff, Ch. 6

April 14  Life Course Theory and Later Life
PRESENTED BY: GEORGE KYPRIOTAKIS
PRESENTED BY: BARBARA BOVEINGTON-MOLTER

April 21  Life Course Theory, Late Modernity and Ideology
Also recommended:

Life History Interviews: Begin Student Presentations

April 28  Life History Interviews: Student Presentations