

APPLICATION FOR NEW COURSE

1. Submitted by College of Public Health Date _____

Department/Division offering course Gerontology

2. Proposed designation and Bulletin description of this course

a. Prefix and Number GRN 772 b. Title* Aging and the Life Course

*NOTE: If the title is longer than 24 characters (including spaces), write
A sensible title (not exceeding 24 characters) for use on transcripts _____

c. Lecture/Discussion hours per week 3 d. Laboratory hours per week 0

e. Studio hours per week 0 f. Credits 3

g. Course description

This seminar will establish a common foundation of knowledge through examinations of traditional "life courses" influencing individuals as they age through time, including household and family, education and work, and housing. This foundation will be built upon using critical examinations of such themes as gender roles, spatial experience, cognitive change and memory, and structural effects on life trajectories. Emphasis will be placed on surveys of existing literature and on integrating various life course elements within social and behavioral theory.

h. Prerequisites (if any)

none

i. May be repeated to a maximum of 1 (if applicable)

4. To be cross-listed as

Prefix and Number

Signature, Chairman, cross-listing department

5. Effective Date Fall 2007 (semester and year)

6. Course to be offered Fall Spring Summer

7. Will the course be offered each year? Yes No
(Explain if not annually)

Alternate years because of demand on faculty time.

8. Why is this course needed?

No other critical life course instruction that is gerontologically based is offered at UK

9. a. By whom will the course be taught? John F. Watkins

b. Are facilities for teaching the course now available? Yes No
If not, what plans have been made for providing them?

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10. What enrollment may be reasonably anticipated? 15
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11. Will this course serve students in the Department primarily? Yes No
Will it be of service to a significant number of students outside the Department? Yes No
If so, explain.
Graduate students within social or behavioral programs campus wide may benefit from the seminar
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- Will the course serve as a University Studies Program course? Yes No
If yes, under what Area? _____
12. Check the category most applicable to this course
- traditional; offered in corresponding departments elsewhere;
 relatively new, now being widely established
 not yet to be found in many (or any) other universities
13. Is this course applicable to the requirements for at least one degree or certificate at the University of Kentucky? Yes No
14. Is this course part of a proposed new program: Yes No
If yes, which? _____
-
15. Will adding this course change the degree requirements in one or more programs? * Yes No
If yes, explain the change(s) below

16. Attach a list of the major teaching objectives of the proposed course and outline and/or reference list to be used.
17. If the course is a 100-200 level course, please submit evidence (e.g., correspondence) that the Community College System has been consulted. Check here if 100-200.
18. If the course is 400G or 500 level, include syllabi or course statement showing differentiation for undergraduate and graduate students in assignments, grading criteria, and grading scales. Check here if 400G-500.
19. Within the Department, who should be contacted for further information about the proposed course?
Name John Watkins Phone Extension 7-1450 x80240

*NOTE: Approval of this course will constitute approval of the program change unless other program modifications are proposed.

20. Signatures to report approvals:

2-20-08
DATE of Approval by Department Faculty

GRAHAM D. ROWLES / Graham D Rowles
printed name Reported by Department Chair signature

2-20-08
DATE of Approval by College Faculty

Linda A. Alexander / Linda A Alexander
printed name Reported by College Dean signature
Assoc Dean for Academic Affairs

* DATE of Approval by Undergraduate Council

printed name Reported by Undergraduate Council Chair signature

* DATE of Approval by Graduate Council

printed name Reported by Graduate Council Chair signature

2/21/08
* DATE of Approval by Health Care Colleges Council (HCCC)

Heidi Anderson / Heidi M Anderson
printed name Reported by Health Care Colleges Council Chair signature

* DATE of Approval by Senate Council

Reported by Office of the Senate Council

* DATE of Approval by University Senate

Reported by Office of the Senate Council

*If applicable, as provided by the *University Senate Rules*. (<http://www.uky.edu/USC/New/RulesandRegulationsMain.htm>)

SYLLABUS – GRN 772 *Aging and the Life Course*

Instructors: John F. Watkins, Ph.D.
206E Health Sciences-CTW
Phone: 257-1450, ext. 80240
Email: geg173@uky.edu

Topical Overview

Everyone has a life course, which in the most basic sense is nothing more than a history of an individual's life from birth through death. Certain elements of this history may be common to everyone. We all, for example, experience natural biological aging as we move from infancy through adolescence, and as our bodies continue to change through late adulthood. Most of us will pass through school at certain ages, and become employed. Most likely we will marry and perhaps have children. And we most certainly will die at some time. The particular experiences within this history, however, vary considerably among individuals, across cultures, and throughout time

Why examine the life course within a graduate seminar? At one level we might justify this focus by acknowledging the high and growing frequency with which life course, life cycle, or life span variables are applied in research to help explain individual and social behaviors. A great example of this would be assessments of the changing impacts of the Baby Boomers. Common sequencing of schooling, marriage, and employment have been observed and applied to the social impacts experienced over the past half century. Furthermore, anticipated retirement and aging patterns of Baby Boomers are being used to project fiscal pressures and service demands in the future. We would consider such research to be "static" applications of life course concepts; groups of individuals have life trajectories and transitions that are viewed as relatively common and predictable, and the transitions in particular are linked to simultaneous observations of behavior. An employment transition to retirement, for example, is linked to an amenity move, or a physiological transition to disabled, say through a stroke, is linked to nursing home placement. Even a cursory review of the literature would demonstrate a dominance of this sort of life course application.

At a second level we would justify the life course focus with a brief statement: *We are because of what we have been, and we do because of what we have done.* At a blush this appears rather simple, but it implies a dynamic that necessarily complicates the life course in important ways. At the root of this statement are experiences and memories, elements of a person's life that are ultimately individualized. Our images of self, and our personal and social behaviors, for example, are largely products of a lifetime's worth of accumulated experiences, the memories of which become modified over time. Think of an elder who detests milk because she spent her youth and early adult years on a dairy farm. Or consider a frail elder who refuses to leave the small flat in which she has spent the vast majority of her life. Or explain why an Alzheimer's victim and war veteran becomes disturbed when uniformed nurses try to offer assistance.

This seminar will begin by establishing a common foundation of knowledge through examinations of the traditional "life courses" influencing individuals as they age through time. These life courses include: Household and Family (members of a household); Education and Career (schooling and work); and Housing (type and size of residence). Emphasis will be placed on surveys

of existing literature and on integrating the various life courses into a more coherent theoretical framework.

With some foundational knowledge under our belt, we will then start to probe uncharted territory. In particular, we will try to address these central questions:

1. *How are life courses expressed over space?*
2. *How is an individual's 'life experience' acquired, combined with other experiences, and modified through life?*
3. *How is spatialized cumulative life experience influential in the development of place ties and concepts of home?*

As we investigate these concepts we will seek to place individual experience and decisions in the broader context of societal change, which includes relationships with aggregate transitions in economies, culture, social organization, and political structure. In other words, we will try to determine what it is like to age here or there, and perhaps now or then.

Seminar Objectives

Seminar participants will gain:

- A fundamental knowledge of existing foundations in life course concepts;
- An appreciation and understanding of the complexities of life course perspectives;
- An ability to critically extend life course concepts and apply derived theory in diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

Seminar Organization

Week 1: Foundations of the Life Course Approach

Tuesday – Preliminary thoughts, behavioral modification, and administrivia.

Wednesday – The life course of households and families

Thursday – The life course of education and employment

Week 2: Moving Toward an Integrated Perspective

Tuesday – What's in a structure? Housing as venue for the life course

Wednesday – Balancing family and work with "expectations"

Thursday – Methodological considerations in integrated study

Week 3: Spatial Characteristics of the Life Course

Tuesday – Geographies of life and living

Wednesday – The place of experience, and the experience of place

Thursday – Biographies and life stories: Another look at methods

Week 4: The Space-Place-Home Continuum

Tuesday – Defining home and home identities

Wednesday – The power of home in life course perspective

Thursday – Saying goodbye: end of life and the end of class

Seminar Requirements

- Active and respectful participation in seminar discussion
- Consistent attendance
- Completing assigned readings on time

- Completing assigned writing on time
- Being responsive to approaches taken outside of the "home" discipline. Participants from any discipline are welcome. But during this seminar I would like for all disciplinary attachments to be dropped.

Class Activities and Evaluation

You should fully expect to be short-changed by the end of this seminar. The life course literature is large and broad, and we cannot possibly cover it all in four weeks. Nor will we have adequate time to sit and productively stew over certain concepts and ideas, which is a benefit of a full 16-week semester. Finally, there is insufficient time to conduct individualized research topics without sacrificing critical understanding of the life course. So, what *CAN* we do?

Reading packets, composed of selected articles, book chapters, and/or reports will be made available for copying before each week. You should read through the assigned materials before class, since class activities will be dominated by focused discussions associated with the readings. We have chosen to include a relatively small number of readings overall, and place greater emphasis on promoting critical understanding of the things we do read.

There will be four (4) reaction papers required. The assignment sheets for each paper will be distributed on each Tuesday, and the papers will be due each Thursday. ***These papers, graded on a numeric scale, will count for 80% of your final grade.***

There will be a number of very brief exercises, often specified within the reading packets or perhaps during our seminar meetings. ***These exercises, graded using a +/- system, will count for 20% of your final grade.***

Other Odds-n-Ends

- We encourage—expect, actually—free and uninhibited discussion in this seminar. But we do have qualifications. First, we ask that you respect and appreciate the individual life courses of all seminar participants. Second, we ask that you all work together to ensure that all participants have equal opportunity to express their thoughts. Please avoid excessive “Graham-ing” (unintentional domination of discourse) or excessive “John-ing” (intentional withdrawal from active engagement).
- We hope to provide a secure environment for learning. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable, because of physical conditions of the classroom, topics being discussed, or the manner in which participants conduct themselves, PLEASE talk with either of us immediately so that the situation can be improved.
- Plan on being in class each day for the full time. If this is not feasible, then we ask that you reconsider your registration. If the unexpected happens and you cannot attend a session, please try to let us know beforehand.
- Late assignments will not be accepted for credit. And we basically do not believe in assigning incompletes. Put more bluntly, the four weeks of this seminar represent a do-or-die mentality with regard to grading.
- Writing assignments should conform to academic standards of the English language, and they should be typed double-spaced using a legible serif font of 11 or 12 points.
- We encourage you to talk with us at any time, and for virtually any reason. We particularly ask that you talk with us if you have any difficulties that might hinder normal progress in the seminar so that fair accommodations can be made.

- Finally, we ask that you have fun! And we welcome any efforts to bring enjoyment to the next four weeks so long as we maintain the vision of meeting our scholarly objectives.