

**ANTHROPOLOGY OF AGING AND THE AGED
(ANTH 350)****Dr. K. Brook**
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is devoted to the analysis of the influences of cultural systems on the universal human experience of aging. Special emphasis is placed on the behaviors and meanings attached to the stages of growing older in a variety of cultural systems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES**A. Theory of Aging in Cross-Cultural Perspective**

1. To discover any human behaviors which are universal aspects of aging.
2. To locate systemic variations in the process of aging.
3. To define those life career problems and challenges generated by the process of aging.

B. The Development of a Greater Appreciation and Awareness of the Dynamics of Aging.

1. To analyze the litany of myths and stereotypes attached to aging and the aged.
2. To elucidate what is inevitable about aging and what manifestations are cultural elaborations.
3. To develop more relevant and humane social policies with regard to aging and the aged.

SYLLABUS**A. Framework for an Anthropology of Aging**

- 1.. Demographic aspects of biocultural evolution and life-course.
2. Life-course and social structure
3. Aging and Modernization

B. Conceptions of Aging and the Aged

1. Aging as disease
2. Aging as dying
3. Aging as disengagement
4. Aging as dependency and regression
5. Aging as a subculture/minority group
6. Aging as development

C. Aging and the Aged in Cross-Cultural Perspective

1. Age-grades, age sets, age classes
2. Function of the aged in kin-based societies
3. Aging and hunting and gathering societies
4. Aging and pastoralism
5. Aging and horticultural societies
6. Aging and intensive farming societies
7. Aging and industrial societies
8. Aging and post-industrial societies

D. The Anthropology of Aging and the Aged in the United States

1. The aged as a subculture
2. The aged in kinship networks
3. Social environments of the aged

4. Aged and bureaucratic systems
5. Aged and cultural beliefs

REQUIRED READINGS

Benet, Sula. *Abkhasians: The Long Lived People of the Caucasus*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.

Holmes, Ellen and Lowell Holmes. *Other Cultures Elder Years*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995.

Keith, Jerome, *et.al.* *The Aging Experience*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.

Myerhoff, Barbara. *Number Our Days*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be two examinations. Examinations will include material from the assigned readings, class lectures and class discussions. The examinations are not cumulative. You are to take the examinations as scheduled. Only in exceptional cases will make-ups be permitted.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The usual format of the class will be discussion and lecture. Each student is responsible for the completion of assigned readings before each class. Participation in class will be strongly encouraged.

OFFICE HOURS

Please feel free to see me during my office hours which are Mondays 11-1150, Wednesdays 2-250, and Thursdays 3-350, or by appointment - Dickson Hall room 406.



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