

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

**GEOG 391, PSYC 391 (A01), SOCI 390, SOSC 390 and ASHI504 2014F C01**

**Exploring Aging through Film**

**Sept-Dec 2014**

**Class Time:** Tuesday, 5:30 – 8:20 pm  
**Class Room:** DSB 103

**Lead Instructor:** Dr. Holly Tuokko  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Canadians are living longer than ever before. A 2010 Statistics Canada report on births and deaths showed life expectancy at birth has now reached 80.7 years. Older adults continue to contribute to society and engage in a variety of meaningful activities, making this an increasingly common experience for Canadians in later life. In response to these demographic changes, the multidisciplinary field of gerontology, the scientific study of the biological, psychological, sociological, geographical and environmental phenomena associated with aging, has grown rapidly over the past two decades as researchers work to identify factors influencing the aging process and the quality of later life experiences.

The impact of this 'longevity revolution' on how we live and understand our lives has far-reaching implications. These will be examined in this course through film. Perhaps more than any other forms of contemporary media, films offer portrayals of later life in a breadth of social contexts, and thus they provide viewers with alternatives to the singular view that equates aging with decline and age 65 with the end of development. Through film, both the unique challenges that confront older adults and the energy, resourcefulness and determination with which they address them can be depicted. Despite the increasing number of films and other forms of visual media focusing on characters in later life, these media forms have yet to receive exposure and serious critical attention. This is surprising given their power to influence the ways in which individuals experience and, ultimately, our culture defines aging. How is the journey through later life depicted in contemporary visual media? How do these portrayals relate to the empirical data available on aging and development? Do these films reflect what we have learned and are learning about the aging process from those who have embarked on their own later life journeys? Do they resonate with our own experiences?

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- Discuss major issues in later life development from multiple theoretical and interdisciplinary perspectives;

- Analyze visual media for themes relevant to aging and later life;
- Consider whether the identified themes reflect contemporary popular cultural views on aging and later life;
- Relate classroom material to everyday-life experiences;
- Integrate academic literature with thematic analysis of visual media.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Course requirements include attendance to view films, readings, class discussion, individual writing assignments, and a group project.

The format of the course is one 3 hour session per week involving students from the Departments of Geography, Psychology and Sociology as well as non-credit participants enrolling through Continuing Studies.

**Readings:** Specific readings for each meeting will be posted on Coursespaces and announced in class (readings from academic literature that relates to themes in the film). It is expected that readings will be completed before the class for discussion in class.

**Class procedure:** In the first class (September 9), the course and interdisciplinary perspectives on aging will be introduced to undergraduate students from Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and Social Sciences, and expectations for class participation will be addressed. In the following classes, the undergraduate students will be joined by non-credit participants registered through Continuing Studies. Four (4) feature films (Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Still Mine, Savages, and Beginners), as well as other visual media representations relevant to aging, will be introduced and viewed, followed by a guided discussion of the themes portrayed. As part of this discussion, the relevance of this portrayal to our own experiences with aging, and how they relate to existing research in the area will be explored. Throughout the course, the interdisciplinary context of aging will be revisited and integrated with the course content and procedures.

## **EVALUATION**

**Class Discussions/Participation:** Discussions about the films viewed are essential to the learning process for this course. Class time will be spent viewing films and discussing the themes/concepts depicted in the films in the context of the readings you have done in advance of viewing the films. If a student is unable to attend a class, the lead instructor must be contacted by the student and the material covered in class reviewed and discussed with this instructor. **Total value = 10%**

**Short reports (Writing Assignments):** There will be two (2) short writing assignments in this course. The first (Short report 1) will involve the identification of themes/concepts relevant to aging depicted in a short film shown in class and is worth 15% (**paper due September 23, 2014**). The other will involve summarizing any three (3) of the readings posted on Coursespaces, each worth 5% for a total value of 15%. The student will select one reading from those assigned by each discipline (i.e., one assigned in Geography, one assigned in Psychology, and one assigned in Sociology). All three (3) of these reports are **due on Oct. 7, 2014**. Additional information regarding the writing assignment requirements will be provided in class. *No late papers will be accepted.* **Total value = 30%**

**Projects:** There will be two (2) projects, each worth **30%**. More details about the projects will be given in class.

### **Project 1:**

**Narrated Powerpoint and Critique:** Students will be assigned to groups and each group will be assigned a film to view. Each group will use the Narration feature in Powerpoint to prepare a slideshow (maximum 10 slides with a maximum presentation time of 10 minutes) to be presented to the class on **28 October 2014 (worth 10%)**. This Powerpoint presentation will describe the film and provides a critique of the film relating it to materials from the course (lectures, readings, discussion. All students in the group will receive the same grade for the Powerpoint unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Each student in each group will prepare an individual paper **worth 20%** on the film and the making of the Powerpoint presentation (**due October 28, 2014**). Additional information regarding project requirements will be provided in class. **No late papers will be accepted.** Each student is to keep a copy of her/his paper. **Total Value = 30% (10% group Powerpoint; 20% individual paper).**

### **Project 2:**

**A Night at the Movies (A Critical Comparison of Two Films):** Students will write a report comparing and contrasting the themes/concepts identified in: A) Best Exotic Marigold Hotel and Still Mine *OR* B) Still Mine and Savages using information obtained through course preparation (lectures, readings, discussion) and personal experience. Additional information regarding project requirements will be provided in class. **Papers are due November 25, 2014. No late papers will be accepted.** Each student is to keep a copy of her/his paper. **Total Value = 30%.**

Letter grades will be assigned as follows with scores derived to 2 decimal places.

<b>A+</b>	<b>90-100</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>70-72</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>85-89</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>65-69</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>80-84</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>60-64</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>77-79</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>50-59</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>73-76</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>0-49</b>

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Important Course Policy Information (attached) and to check their registration status by the Drop deadline (September 16, 2014) to ensure they are registered only in the courses they have been attending.

### **Course Experience Survey (CES)**

We value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to us regarding the course and our teaching, as well as to help the departments and the university improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. We will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Proposed Class schedule Sept-Dec 2014

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>
September 9	Introduction to course for undergraduate students
September 16	Demonstration of course expectations and viewing of short films for all participants (undergraduate and Continuing Studies)
September 23 (add date Sept 19) (drop date Sept 16) <b>Short Report 1 due (worth 15%)</b>	<b><i>Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</i></b> (view film/discussion)
September 30	<b><i>Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</i></b> –discussion continued with supplementary materials Feedback on papers
October 7 <b>Short report 2 due (worth 15%)</b>	Demonstration of project 1 expectations
October 14	<b><i>Still Mine</i></b> (view film/discussion)
October 21	<b><i>Still Mine</i></b> – discussion continued with supplementary materials
October 28 <b>Project 1 paper due (worth 20%)</b>	Project 1 group presentations ( <b>worth 10%</b> )
November 3	<b><i>Savages</i></b> (view film/discussion)
November 11	<b><i>Reading Break</i></b>
November 18	<b><i>Savages</i></b> continued discussion Materials relating to aging themes; poster presentations
November 25 <b>Project 2 due (worth 30%)</b>	<b><i>Beginners</i></b> (view film/discussion)
December 2	<b><i>Beginners</i></b> - continued discussion Integration and wrap-up

**Note: 10% for Class Discussion/Participation**