

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

**GEOG 391 (CRN 11829), PSYC 391 (CRN 13844), SOCI 390 (CRN 12944), SOSC 390 (CRN 13013) and
ASHI504 C01 Exploring Aging through Film**

Sept 13, 2016-November 29, 2016

Class Time: Tuesday, 5:30 – 8:20 pm
Class Room: MAC D115

Instructors:

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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 and explore 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 the medium of film. Perhaps more than any other form of contemporary media, films offer portrayals of later life in a breadth of contexts (social, cultural, political, economic, geographical), 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 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 over the life course? 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? And, as importantly, how do they resonate with our own experiences?

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

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

- Analyze visual media for themes relevant to aging and later life;
- Consider how the identified themes reflect both contemporary popular cultural views on aging and later life and empirical perspectives on aging and lifelong health and wellness;
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills;
- Relate classroom material to everyday-life experiences;
- Integrate academic literature with the thematic analysis of visual media.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Course requirements include attendance in class to view films and participate in discussions. Students are expected to complete course readings prior to class.

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 class will be posted on Coursespaces and announced in class (assigned readings from the academic literature will relate to themes emerging in the films). **Again note: It is expected that readings will be completed before the class for discussion in class.**

Class procedure: In the first class (September 13), the course outline and expectations will be discussed. A short film will be viewed and each of the instructors will introduce her disciplinary perspective on aging to undergraduate students from Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and Social Sciences, and participants from Continuing Studies. Four (4) feature films will be analyzed (The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Still Mine, Savages, and the Lady in the Van). Other visual media (e.g., National Film Board of Canada) relevant to aging will be introduced, viewed and analyzed. As part of this discussion, the relevance of these portrayals to our own experiences with aging, and to existing research will be explored. Throughout the course, the interdisciplinary context of aging will be emphasized and integrated into the course content and procedures.

EVALUATION

1. Class Discussions/Participation: Total value = 10% 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 and in relation to the multiple disciplinary perspectives employed in class. If a student is unable to attend a class, it is up to him/her to inform the lead instructors (Cloutier and Kobayashi) and to ensure that the material covered in class is reviewed.

2. Critical Reflexive Journal (Writing Assignments): Total value = 30%. Due: November 22, 2016

A reflexive journal is a written record of insights about learning, but it also allows students to go back over previous insights and deepen their learning about aspects of aging.

There are 3 main assignments as part of this critical reflexive journal. The assignments are meant to be developed on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. You can ask your instructors to review this three-part document at any point in the semester. Each assignment is designed to deepen your engagement with the course materials and your learning about aging-related issues.

a. Assignment 1. Fateful Moments: Life Map Exercise. Part A and B. (to be initiated [Part A] in the third class (October 4th) and finalized [Part B] and handed in by November 22). Many films feature critical

junctures in characters' lives that may be regarded as turning points or fateful moments. A life map is a visual/graphical depiction of these pathways in a person's life annotated with such turning points or fateful moments (e.g., marriage, moves, loss of parents, or spouses, etc). Review the reading by Nancy Worth (2010) and other articles for help with this exercise. Students will begin to develop a visual depiction of their life maps with explanatory notes in the third class. This life map will then be reviewed, annotated and then reflected upon (i.e., in 4-5 pages double-spaced) during the course and finalized by November 22. In this 4-5 page write-up students should consider how and why their life maps evolved as they did over the course in relation to viewed media, readings, papers, discussions and fateful moments in the lives of characters from the reviewed films. **Value: 10%**

b. Assignment 2. Synthesis of Key Readings. Summarize the key points emerging from 6 articles on the course outline and 3 articles you have gathered that are not on the outline (NOTE: these should/could be readings you will be able to use in your papers). Links to the course readings will be posted on Coursespaces. Students will be responsible for selecting at least one reading from each of the other disciplines (e.g., if you are in Geography, you must include at least one reading from Psychology, and one from Sociology). You can use the annotated bibliography guide (posted on Coursespaces) to construct your synthesis/review and make notes on the readings. This synthesis document should be 6-8 pages in length, double-spaced with labelled sections and sub-sections as appropriate. This synthesis document should be written like a literature review reflecting key topics emerging throughout the course. Synthesis documents should have a clear purpose/focus statement and should use APA format (see UVic website or other websites for guides and reference the guide used in your document). Proper in-text, and an end document 'Reference' section is expected. Please see the instructors if you are not familiar with literature reviews. This document **MUST** not exceed 8 pages in length. **Value: 15%.**

c. Assignment 3. Weekly Reflections. The third part of your reflexive journal is your weekly reflections on lessons and learnings in class. Each class you are requested to write a short (1-3) paragraph free-form summary of the lessons/insights/observations drawn, and based upon readings and discussions from class (hand written or type written). **Value: 5%.**

Please note, you can set an appointment to meet with one of the instructors any time throughout the course to get a quick assessment of how you are doing with the exercises in the reflective journal.

3. **Projects:** In addition to the Critical Reflexive Journal, there are two (2) main projects in this course, each worth **30%**. More specific details about each project will be discussed in class and posted on Coursespaces.

Project 1: Narrated Powerpoint and Critique. Total Value = 30% (10% group Powerpoint; 20% Individual paper). Students will be assigned to small groups for this assignment and each group will selected or assigned a film to view. Each group will then use the Narration feature in Powerpoint to prepare a slideshow (maximum 10 slides with a maximum presentation time of 12 minutes) to be presented to the class on **25 October 2016 (Value: 10%)**. This Powerpoint presentation will describe the film and provide 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 Narrated Powerpoint unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Each student in each group will prepare an individual paper **worth 20%** on the film, including insights on the construction of the Powerpoint presentation (**Due November 1**). 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 and they must be submitted online to the lead course-instructors (to indicate time received).

Project 2: A Night at the Movies - Critical Comparison of Two Films: Working independently, students will write a report comparing and contrasting the themes/concepts identified in two of the feature films shown and analyzed in class. Two choices are available: A) Best Exotic Marigold Hotel and Lady in the Van *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. These comparative papers are due (hard copy or on-line?) on the last day of classes **November 29th, 2016. No late papers will be accepted.** Each student is to keep a copy of her/his paper.

Total Value = 30%.

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

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

Students are expected to familiarize themselves and behave in accordance with Important Course Policy Information on academic integrity and plagiarism. Students must also check their registration status by the Drop deadline to ensure they are registered only in the courses they have been attending.

Research as part of our Class

This year we would like to ask you, on a completely voluntary basis, to be part of a research project on interdisciplinary teaching and learning opportunities. Our main source of data for this research would be your reflective journals. We would protect your identity and confidentially in the use of these data by never providing your name or other identifying information with any of the data that we use. Your marks will not be influenced to any degree by your participation or non-participation in this project and your data can be withdrawn at any time upon your request. To do this, simply communicate with one of the course instructors at any point during the semester or afterwards. We hope to retain these data for five years after their period of collection.

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 be expected to provide your instructors with your comments about the course on an anonymous survey reflecting on 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.

Proposed Class schedule Sept 13 -November 29: *(Note: may be subject to minor adjustments)*

Date	Content
September 13	. Introduction to course. Discuss course outline and evaluation elements (Participation, Reflexive journal, Project 1 and Project 2). . Introduce core ideas from geography, psychology and sociology. . Watch short film (Life’s Waltz). Begin modelling thematic analysis

	process.
September 20	. Continue discussion of core ideas from geography, psychology and sociology. . Watch short film (Afternoon Tea) and continue thematic analysis modeling .
September 27	Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (view film/begin discussion).
October 4	Continue Best Exotic Marigold Hotel discussion and analysis Begin Life Map exercise.
October 11	. Discuss Narrated Powerpoint assignment (Project 1). Review film choices. . Panel Discussion (Trudy Pauluth-Penner, others TBA)
October 28 18?	Still Mine (view film/discussion).
October 25 Narrated Powerpoint Due	Project 1 Narrated Powerpoint presented in class. Papers due next week. (Value: 10% for Powerpoint and 20% for paper)
November 1 Project 1 Paper Due	Savages (view film/discussion) Project 1 Paper Due
November 8	Savages (discussion continued) Short Film: Oma's Quilt
November 9-11	Reading Break
November 16 15?	Lady in the Van (view film/discussion) Conclude Life Map exercise.
November 22 Critical Reflexive Journals Due (Value: 30%)	Lady in the Van - concluding discussion Short Film Analysis: Pumpkin and Old Lace .
November 29th Project 2 Due (Value: 30%)	Course Review, Integration and Wrap-up Project 2 Critical Comparison of Two Films Due

Note: a mark of 10% will count towards Class Discussion/Participation/Attendance

Please remember to provide us with your feedback on the course. Many thanks.