

HLTHAGE 3L03 EMBODIED AGING Fall 2022

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Course Description

This course explores the centrality of the body in social gerontological knowledge, policies, and practices related to aging, and the experiences of late life. Examples of the topics addressed include the classification of the older body, bodily change and impairment, technological advancements for the body/prosthetic devices, and the relationship between the body/identity/self over the life course.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Define embodiment and understand various intersections of aging and embodiment
- Apply various social theories to a variety of experiences of embodied aging.
- Critically examine how the aging body and aging identities are perceived, constructed, performed, managed, accomplished, and/or disciplined.
- Appreciate the variety of aging embodiments in relation to a number of social topics/norms (e.g., aging stereotypes, media, consumerism, disability, technologies) and social locations.
- Engage in reflective practice on their position as learners and citizens.
- Identify embodied aging narratives & critically deconstruct representations of aging bodies in popular culture

Required Materials and Texts

- There are no required texts for this course. Course materials will be posted on the course site on Avenue to Learn.
- Course materials, including any visual and audio recordings, are copyrighted, and owned by Dr. Rachel Weldrick. **It is prohibited to record or copy** by any means, in any format, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part, in the absence of express written permission from Dr. Rachel Weldrick **any of the lectures or materials provided or published in any form** during or from the course.

Class Format

This class will involve a combination of **lecture-style** classes (typically Tuesdays) and **seminar-based discussions** (typically Thursdays). Throughout the term there will be a number of interactive activities. I actively encourage participation and active discussions throughout all of my classes, and recommend students arrive to class prepared for active participation. I welcome critical questions, comments, and reflections from students during every class (including lectures) and aim to foster an inclusive learning environment.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. **Test (in-class)** – 20%, October 4
2. **Group Presentation** – 20%, October 25 & 27 (date to be assigned)
3. **Reading Summaries** – 15%, choose two dates
4. **Take-home exam** – 30%, due by December 8, 6:30 PM
5. **Self-Evaluation** – 15%, October 18, 8:00 PM & December 12, 8:00 PM

Course Evaluation – Details

Test, in-class (20%), due October 4, in class

This test will include questions pertaining to all material to-date. Questions will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

Group Presentation (20%), due October 25/27

Working in groups of 3 or 4, students will critically analyze a piece of popular media (e.g., television show, film, novel, podcast etc.) containing a narrative of embodied aging. Groups will identify a piece of popular media and analyze the ways in which course concepts intersect with the narrative presented in the media, and bolster analysis with supporting literature. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of major course concepts as well as the ability to integrate both scholarly literature (e.g., journal articles) and grey literature (e.g., government documents, policy briefs). This will require theoretical and course concept application. More information, including assignment guidelines (style, delivery, content, etc.), will be posted on Avenue and discussed in-detail on September 8.

Presentations will take place on October 25 and October 27. A sign-up sheet will be posted on Avenue to Learn. There will be designated time in class on October 20 to work on this assignment.

Reading Summaries (15%), choose two dates

Students are required to submit two 'summary of assigned readings'. Each summary should be between 500 and 750 words (2-3 pages double-spaced) and should cover all of the readings for that week. Students should demonstrate that they: 1) have read the articles; 2) can identify some of the salient points within the readings; 3) can synthesize across articles (e.g., compare/contrast, identify arguments that are complimentary, etc.); and 4) can identify 2-3 critical questions related to embodied aging that are raised by the articles (or that you can think of yourself, stimulated by a perspective in the articles).

Students must submit their summaries on the day of the discussion into the appropriate dropbox on Avenue. Any two class dates (with assigned readings) can be selected. Together, these two summaries are worth a total of 15%.

The final day to submit a summary is Thursday, December 1.

Take-home exam (30%), due December 8 by 6:30 PM.

The final test in this course will consist of a take-home exam between December 6 (6:30 PM) and December 8 (due by 6:30 PM). It will be an “open-book” test in that you are free to refer to any notes or lecture slides during your test window. The test will cover material from the entire course. Questions will consist of short- and long-answer written questions.

The test will be made available on Avenue to Learn at 6:30 PM on December 6 (following class) and must be submitted by 6:30 PM on December 8 meaning that you will have 48 hours to finish the test. The test is written such that it can be completed in under two hours’ time. Additional information, including possible questions, will be shared in class ahead of the test date.

Self-Evaluation (15%), due October 18, 8:00 & December 12, 8:00 PM

Students will be asked to complete two self-evaluations throughout the term: one at the midway point (October 14) and one at the end of the term (December 12).

The midway self-evaluation will require students to grade themselves out of 10 based on their class attendance and participation in the first half of the term. Students will be asked to justify this grade with a ~500-word reflection on your participation (e.g., what have you done well, what could you have done better), alongside a ~250-word plan for their participation in the remainder of the course. **The midway self-evaluation is due on Avenue to Learn by October 18, by 8:00 PM.**

The end-of-term self-evaluation will also require students to grade themselves out of 10 based on their class attendance and participation in the second half of the term. Students will be asked to justify this grade with a ~500-word reflection on their participation in the entire course (e.g., how well you participated, what weeks you could have improved upon). **The end-of-term self-evaluation is due on Avenue to Learn by December 12, by 8:00 PM.**

More information will be shared in class regarding both self-evaluations and will be posted on Avenue.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (September 5-9)

September 6 – Introduction to the course

Readings: Please read through the course outline very carefully

Notes: This class will consist of a detailed overview of the course, assignments, and other relevant information for the term.

September 8 – Introduction to embodiment & aging (pt. 1)

Readings: None

Notes: Please come to this class prepared to introduce yourself to the class and participate in an introductory activity.

Week 2 (September 12-16)

September 13 – Introduction to embodiment & aging (pt. 2)

Readings:

Readings: Tulle, E. (2015). Theorising embodiment and ageing. In J. Twigg & W. Martin (Eds.) Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology. [Chapter 16, pp 125-132](#)

September 15 – Aging as an embodied social process

Readings:

Readings: Laz, C. (2003). Age embodied. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 17(4), 503-519. [Link](#)

Gilleard, C. & Higgs, P. (2013). Ageing, corporeality, & embodiment. [Chapter 1: Identity, Embodiment and the Somatic Turn in the Social Sciences](#).

Week 3 (September 19-23)

September 20 – Aging stereotypes

Readings:

National Institute on Aging. (n.d.). 10 myths about aging (webpage). Accessed at: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/10-myths-about-aging>

September 22 – Stereotype embodiment

Readings:

Meisner, B. A. & Levy, B. R. (2016) Age stereotypes' influence on health: Stereotype embodiment theory. In V. L. Bengtson & R. A. Settersten, Jr. (Eds.) Handbook of Theories of Aging. [Chapter 14, pp 259-275](#)

Week 4 (September 26-30)

September 27 – Images and representations of aging (pt. 1)

Readings:

Featherstone, M. & Hepworth, M. (2005). Images of ageing: Cultural representations of later life. In M. L. Johnson (Ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*. [Chapter 4.10 354-362](#).

September 29 – Images and representations of aging (pt. 2)

Readings:

Richards, N. Warren, L., & Gott, M. (2012). The challenge of creating 'alternative' images of ageing: Lessons from a project with older women. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26(1), 65-78. [Link](#)

Week 5 (October 3-7)

October 4 – In-class test

Readings: None

Notes: There will be a test on this date in lieu of a lecture.

October 6 – Aging bodies, advertising, & consumer culture

Readings:

Readings: Calasanti, T., & King, N. (2007). "Beware of the estrogen assault": Ideals of old manhood in anti-aging advertisements. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 21(4), 357-368. [Link](#)

Robinson, T., Callister, M., Magoffin, D., & Moore, J. (2007). The portrayal of older characters in Disney animated films. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 21(3), 203-213. [Link](#)

Week 6 (October 10-14)

Reading Week, No class

Week 7 (October 17-21)

October 18 – Body image in later life

Readings:

Evans, A. B., & Sleaf, M. (2012). "You feel like people are looking at you and laughing": Older adults' perceptions of aquatic physical activity. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26(4), 515-526. [Link](#)

Ward, R., & Holland, C. (2011). 'If I look old, I will be treated old': hair and later-life image dilemmas. *Ageing & Society*, 31(2), 288-307. [Link](#)

Notes: The mid-way point self-evaluation is due on Avenue by 8:00 PM on Tuesday, October 18.

October 20 – No class, time reserved for group work

Readings: None

Notes: This class will be entirely dedicated to preparing for group presentations. Groups can choose to meet in our regular classroom or meet elsewhere. No class will take place on this day.

Week 8 (October 24-28)

October 25 – Group Presentations

Readings: None

October 27 – Group Presentations

Readings: None

Week 9 (October 31-November 4)

November 1 – Dementia Virtual Reality Activity

Readings:

Kontos, P. & Martin, W. (2013). Embodiment and dementia: Exploring critical narratives of selfhood, surveillance, and dementia care. *Dementia*, 12(3), 288-302. [Link](#)

Katz, S. (2013). Dementia, personhood and embodiment: What can we learn from the medieval history of memory?. *Dementia*, 12(3), 303-314. [Link](#)

Notes: Please come to class this day with your phone and headphones (if possible). I also recommend downloading the free app called "A Walk Through Dementia" ahead of time. It is available on the App Store and Google Play Store for free.

November 3 – Dementia & embodiment (pre-recorded lecture)

Readings: None

Notes: This lecture will be pre-recorded and uploaded to Avenue on our regular class time (4:30 PM). No in-person class will take place on this day. Students can

elect to watch this lecture during class time or at a later date. All content in this lecture will be testable on the take-home exam.

Week 10 (November 7-11)

November 8 – Illness & disability

Readings:

Pickard, S. (2013). Biology as destiny? Rethinking embodiment in 'deep' old age. *Ageing & Society*, 34(8), 1279-1291. [Link](#)

de Medeiros, K. & Black, H. (2015) Suffering and pain in old age. In J. Twigg & W. Martin (Eds.) Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology. [Chapter 23](#)

November 10 – Guest lecture by Samantha Teichman (Aging bodies & Identity)

Readings: None

Notes: This lecture will be conducted by Samantha Teichman (doctoral candidate at Simon Fraser University). All content covered in this guest lecture will be testable on the take-home exam.

Week 11 (November 14-18)

November 15 – Physical activity in later life

Readings:

Humberstone, B., & Cutler-Riddick, C. (2015). Older women, embodiment and yoga practice. *Ageing & Society*, 35(6), 1221-1241. [Link](#)

Tulle, E., & Dorrer, N. (2012). Back from the brink: Ageing, exercise and health in a small gym. *Ageing & Society*, 32(7), 1106-1127. [Link](#)

November 17 – Cumulative disadvantage & accelerated aging

Readings:

Ferraro, K. F., & Shippee, T. P. (2009). Aging and cumulative inequality: How does inequality get under the skin?. *The Gerontologist*, 49(3), 333-343. [Link](#)

Week 12 (November 21-25)

November 22 – Technologies and the aging body (pt. 1)

Readings:

Buse, C. E. (2010). E-scaping the ageing body? Computer technologies and embodiment in later life. *Ageing & Society*, 30(6), 987-1009. [Link](#)

November 24 – Technologies and the aging body (pt. 2)

Readings:

Marshall, B. (2019). Our Fitbits, our (ageing) selves: Wearables, self-tracking and ageing embodiment. In S. Katz (Ed.) *Ageing in everyday life: Materialities and embodiments*. Chapter 11 [Available via the McMaster Library & Posted as a PDF on Avenue to Learn]

Week 13 (November 28-December 2)

November 29 – Sexuality & aging (pt. 1)

Readings:

Potts, A., Gavey, N., Grace, V. M., & Vares, T. (2003). The downside of Viagra: women's experiences and concerns. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 25(7), 697-719. [Link](#)

December 1 – Sexuality & aging (pt. 2)

Readings:

Sandber, L. J. (2019). Closer to touch: sexuality, embodiment and masculinity in older men's lives. In S. Katz (Ed.) *Ageing in everyday life: Materialities and embodiments*. Chapter 7 [Available via the McMaster Library & Posted as a PDF on Avenue to Learn]

Notes: This is the last day to submit a reading summary.

Week 14 (December 5-9)

December 6 – Course wrap-up & exam information

Readings: None

Notes: This is the final class of the term and will involve a wrap-up discussion and information about the take-home exam. The take-home exam will be available on Avenue to Learn beginning at 6:30 PM.

December 8 – No class, time reserved for take-home exam

Readings: None

Notes: There will be **no class** on December 8. Students can choose to use this time to work on their take-home exam, which is **due on December 8, by 6:30 PM**.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

All assignments are to be uploaded to the appropriate dropbox on Avenue to Learn by the specified due dates. Acceptable file formats include .doc and .docx. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.

Assignments should be typed and double-spaced in either 10- or 12-point Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Due dates for course assignments are fixed. There will be a deduction of 10% per day for all late assignments. Deductions are calculated per day, not per 24-hour period. No assignments will be accepted 3 days after the original due date. Please refer to assignment instructions for details.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an On-line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the

same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#).

Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the

Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright And Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.