

# **SPECIAL TOPICS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: INTERSECTIONAL AGEISM**

**Winter 2024**

**Instructor:** Dr. Griffin

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## **Course Description**

Ageism is a widespread source of discrimination in Canadian society, consisting of stereotyping and/or discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of age. It occurs at the individual level as stereotyped attitudes about old age that influence our expectations of ourselves and others. However, ageism also functions as older persons' invisibility, marginalization, and social exclusion at various levels of societal organization. Ageist discrimination is rarely experienced in relation to age alone. Stereotypes of many other characteristics such as gender, sexuality, dis/ability, racialized identities, and illness burdens also inform people's negative attitudes and behaviours. For this reason, ageism is best understood through the lens of intersectionality. In this course, we will explore intersectional experiences of ageism at the individual, interpersonal and societal levels across several contexts and realms – including: the body and self/identity, health & healthcare, sport & physical activity, housing & homelessness, elder abuse, technology, employment & retirement, caregiving & receiving, and intergenerational relationships.

## **Course Objectives**

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

1. Recognize the expression of ageist attitudes and discrimination in individual behaviours, the media and various cultural expressions, organizational policies, and societal structures;
2. Identify key themes in the literature on ageism;
3. Recognize and explain how ageist discrimination is experienced differently by older adults based on their intersecting identities and the social worth that is attributed to each of them in particular social, cultural, and organizational contexts.
4. Reflect on your position as an active, engaged citizen and consider your influence of power and agency on your own (and others') experience of aging.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- All readings and supplemental materials will be available either through Avenue to Learn or on-line.

## **Class Format**

This is a seminar style course that requires active participation, in-person attendance and contribution from all members of the class. The format will be interactive lecture-based with active participation, contribution, and discussion from students.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Seminar preparation & participation - 25%, throughout the term
  - A. Individual reading notes (weekly)
  - B. Small group work & summary notes (weekly)
  - C. Oral participation in seminar discussion & activities (weekly)
  - D. End-of-term self-assessment (on/before April 8<sup>th</sup>)
2. Myth-busters assignment – 25%, due February 9
3. Media assignment – 30%, due March 8
4. Final presentation – 20%, on April 1 or 8

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **1. Seminar preparation & participation: 25%, due throughout the term**

Seminar preparation and participation includes **four** components:

#### **A: Individual reading notes, due weekly (when readings are assigned)**

In a seminar course, the readings are the course. As such, students need to read the assigned readings at least once and submit notes prior to each class that include:

- A list of at least five words, terms &/or concepts that were new to you or that you feel are important in each reading;
- A summary of the main argument of each reading in your own words (2-4 sentences);
- Two discussion questions for the class

#### **B: Small group work & summary notes, due weekly**

Each week at some point in the class you will meet with your group to discuss the readings. Please assign one person in each group to serve as the scribe, one person to serve as the chair, and one person who will share the groups ideas with the class. **Note these positions should rotate week to week.**

The chair's role is to ensure that everyone participates equitably in the discussion while the scribe summarizes the notes on paper to be submitted to the instructor after class.

These notes will include what the group considers to be: the top five concepts (usually those that were most often selected) along with definitions; very clear and concise summaries of each reading; and one thoughtful question for the class from each reading.

Additionally, various activities each week will require small group work. Participation in these small groups will be assessed by the instructor.

### **C: Participation in seminar discussion, expected weekly**

The third way that student participation will be assessed is through oral participation in group discussion. Participation grades will be based on the ability to demonstrate knowledge of the content of the readings as well as on their ability to critically engage with the reading material by applying and evaluating concepts or comparing ideas across weeks. Quantity does not trump quality. A student can earn an A grade by making one or two thoughtful comments that demonstrate a critical engagement with the ideas from the readings each seminar/week. Alternatively, a student who comments frequently but does not demonstrate any of the learning outcomes above will fare poorly.

Note: You are not expected to understand 100% of the readings prior to the small group or class discussions but rather to have tried your best to engage with the materials, identify what you do not understand and absorb what you do understand.

It is our collective responsibility to foster an open, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment and discussion space. As such, we must commit to honest and critical engagement with the course materials and competing theoretical perspectives, while remaining respectful to each other and our space. Towards this end, this seminar has a zero-tolerance policy on rude, disrespectful, intolerant, and/or offensive behaviour and/or speech. Students who prove disruptive or disrespectful through their actions and/or speech towards the instructor or peers will be asked to leave.

### **D: End-of-Term Self-Assessment, due on/before April 8, 2024**

To conclude the course, you will submit a self-assessment of your participation throughout the semester by **April 8**. While this exercise is not weighted, it is part of your overall participation grade. This process aims to encourage self-reflection and responsibility for your learning and participation.

You will assign yourself a grade based on the reflections you have done in response to some example questions below and please provide a narrative of your justification for your score. I will use this information to guide my evaluation for your final participation grade. You might, for example, list elements that demonstrated the ways in which you participated in this community (learned, completed exercises, wrestled with ideas) as well as some hurdles you may have faced during class discussions. To guide you in this final part of the process, I invite you to consider and respond to the following questions.

- What course activity, task, or assignment was key to achieving your personal goals as a learner in our seminar community? Why/how?
- Weekly, how much time have you dedicated to this course?

- Given the course objectives, your personal goals for the course and your evaluation of your performance, what do you think your preparation and participation grade should be?

## **2. Myth-busters assignment: 25%, due February 9, 2024**

A central feature within this course is separating fact from fiction about aging and population aging. Students will have the opportunity to work individually or in pairs in order to create a 'myth buster' that speaks back to the public in the form of an advertisement. Each student/pair will be able to select if they will use print, radio, social media, or video as their mechanisms for busting a common myth related to aging. Additional details will be made available on Avenue.

## **3. News media assignment: 30%, due March 8, 2024**

For this assignment, students are asked to scan different news sources over the past year for articles that report on the process or experience of aging, in some form. Students will cite the articles and give a *brief* summary of each. Based on the knowledge gained thus far in our class and through the readings, students should spend the bulk of the assignment critically evaluating how aging/older adults are portrayed and understood in the article, with a focus on ageism *and* intersectionality. Topics can include one of the areas of focus within the course or another relevant area. Additional details will be made available on Avenue.

## **4. Final presentation: 20%, on April 1 or 8, 2024**

The fourth and final component that will be evaluated for this course is a final presentation, which will take place on either April 1 or 8, 2024 (students will be assigned to one of these dates by random allocation). For this presentation, each student/pair will give a presentation based on either their myth-buster or news media assignment topic, with additional/supplemental material to lead relevant discussion and/or debate. Length of presentations will be approximately 10 minutes (subject to change, dependent on course enrolment). Additional details will be made available on Avenue.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (January 8)**

#### **'Lecture': Introduction to the Course – Structure and Expectations**

Readings: None

### **Week 2 (January 15)**

#### **Lecture: Ageism & intersectionality**

Readings: Sargeant, M. (2011). Ageism and age discrimination. In Sargeant, M. (Ed.), *Age discrimination and diversity: Multiple discrimination from an age perspective*, pp. 1-15. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Calasanti, T., & King, N. (2015). Intersectionality and age. In Twigg, J., & Martin, W. (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of cultural gerontology*, pp. 193-200. London, UK: Routledge.

### **Week 3 (January 22)**

#### **Lecture: The body & self-identity**

Readings: Calasanti, T. (2005). Ageism, gravity, and gender: Experiences of aging bodies. *Generations*, 29(3), 8-12.

Calasanti, T., King, N., Pietila, I., & Ojala, H. (2018). Rationales for anti-aging activities in middle age: Aging, health, or appearance? *The Gerontologist*, 58(2), 233-241.

### **Week 4 (January 29)**

#### **Lecture: Health & healthcare**

Readings: Chrisler, J.C., Barney, A., & Palatino, B. (2016). Ageism can be hazardous to women's health: Ageism, sexism, and stereotypes of older women in the healthcare system. *Journal of Social Issues*, 72(1), 86-104.

Emler, C.A. (2006). 'You're awfully old to have this disease': Experiences of stigma and ageism in adults 50 years and older living with HIV/AIDS. *The Gerontologist*, 46(6), 781-790.

## **Week 5 (February 5)**

### **Lecture: Sport & physical activity**

Readings: Jin, B., & Harvey, I.S. (2021). Ageism in the fitness and health industry: A review of the literature. *Journal of Aging & Physical Activity*, 29(1), 99-115.

Allain, K.A., & Marshall, B. (2017). Foucault retires to the gym: Understanding embodied aging in the third age. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 36(3), 402-414.

**Due Date: Myth-busters assignment due February 9 by 11:59pm**

## **Week 6 (February 12)**

### **Lecture: Work & retirement**

Readings: Moore, S. (2009). 'No matter what I did I would still end up in the same position': Age as a factor defining older women's experience of labour market participation. *Work, Employment & Society*, 23(4), 655-671.

Hurd Clarke, L., & Korotchenko, A. (2016). 'I know it exists... but I haven't experienced it personally': Older Canadian men's perceptions of ageism as a distant social problem. *Ageing & Society*, 36, 1757-1773.

## **Week 7 (February 19)**

### **MIDTERM RECESS**

Readings: No Readings or Lecture

## **Week 8 (February 26)**

### **Lecture: Elder abuse (violence/risk/safety)**

Readings: Crockett, C., Brandl, B., & Dabby, F.C. (2015). Survivors in the margins: The invisibility of violence against older women. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 27(4-5), 291-302.

Han, S.D., & Mosqueda, L. (2020). Elder abuse in the COVID-19 era. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 68(7), 1386-1387.

## Week 9 (March 4)

### Guest Lecture: Technology

Readings: Cutler, S.J. (2005). Ageism and technology. *Generations*, 24(3), 67-72.

Köttl, H., Gallistl, V., Rohner, R., & Ayalon, L. (2021). "But at the age of 85? Forget it!": Internalized ageism, a barrier to technology use. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 59, article 100971. doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2021.100971

**Due Date: News media assignment due March 8 by 11:59pm**

## Week 10 (March 11)

### Lecture: Intergenerational relationships

Readings: Meisner, B. (2021). Are you OK, Boomer? Intensification of ageism and intergenerational tensions on social media amid COVID-19. *Leisure Sciences*, 43(1-2), 56-61.

von Humboldt, S., Monteiro, A., & Leal, I. (2018). How do older adults experience intergenerational relationships? Different cultures, ambivalent feelings. *Educational Gerontology*, 44(8), 501-513.

## Week 11 (March 18)

### Lecture: Care – giving & receiving

Readings: Zajicek, A., Calasanti, T., Ginther, C., & Summers, J. (2007). Intersectionality and age relations: Unpaid care work and Chicanas. In Calasanti, T., & Slevin, K. (Eds.), *Age matters: Realigning feminist thinking*, pp.175-198. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brotman, S., Ryan, B., Collins, S., Chamberland, L., Cormier, R., Julien, D., Meyer, E., Peterkin, A., & Richard, B. (2007). Coming out to care: Caregivers of gay and lesbian seniors in Canada. *The Gerontologist*, 47(4), 490-503.

## **Week 12 (March 25)**

### **Lecture: Housing & homelessness**

Readings: Canham, S.L., Walsh, C.A., Sussman, T., Humphries, J., Nixon, L., & Burns, V.F. (2021). Identifying shelter and housing models for older people experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Aging & Environment*. Online first, DOI: 10.1080/26892618.2021.1955806

MacNeil, A., & Burns, D. (2021). Bridging the gap between homelessness in older adulthood and elder abuse: Considerations for an age-friendly shelter system. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*. Online first, DOI: 10.1080/08959420.2021.1973342

## **Week 13 (April 1)**

### **Final presentations**

Readings: No Readings or Lecture

## **Week 14 (April 8)**

### **Final presentations**

Readings: No Readings or Lecture

**Due Date: End-of-term self-assessment due April 8 by 11:59pm**

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit assignments to the appropriate assignment folder on Avenue to Learn. Faxed or e-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Your assignments should be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font.

### **Late Assignments**

The due dates for assignments are fixed and non-negotiable. There will be a deduction of 5% per day for all late assignments, unless you submit a McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf>). The MSAF is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences for medical or other reasons that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work worth less than 25% of your overall. In these cases, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work". Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence. If you are absent for more than 3 days, or exceed one request per term, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office. You may be required to submit supporting documentation.

### **No Assignments Will Be Accepted 2 Weeks Past the Due Date**

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **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. Avenue to Learn, 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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, 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](mailto: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.3

## **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, Avenue to Learn 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.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of 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.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-89	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