INTRODUCTION:
According to the Pew Research center, “As the year 2011 began on Jan. 1, the oldest members of the Baby Boom generation celebrated their 65th birthday. In fact, on that day, today, and for every day for the next 19 years, ten thousand Baby Boomers will reach age 65” (Pew Research Center 2012). Presently, older adults constitute the fastest growing age group in the United States. Accompanying the “graying of America” is a host of opportunities and challenges. Arguably, some of the biggest challenges we face as a society pertain to our own misconceptions of aging. Often when we think of aging, our attention turns to physical aging and the complications associated with it. What we regularly forget (and sometimes do not consider) is that the way people age is a product of social organization, political agendas, and the individuals’ social locations within social hierarchies. Aging, its impact and its meaning are mediated by economic, structural, and cultural factors.

This course examines the non-physical aspects of aging in the United States, emphasizing retirement and the social context within which aging occurs. Students will learn of the historical origins of institutionalized retirement and several theoretical frameworks in aging research. With exposure to these perspectives, students will be encouraged to (1) examine aging-related issues; (2) ask how theoretical perspectives influence what type of questions get asked; and (2) understand how those questions and their answers influence our perceptions of aging.

OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the semester, students will
- Be able to describe the sociological theories related to aging
- Be able to describe the origins and evolution of the Social Security Act of 1935
- Contrast the multiple conceptualizations of retirement
- Discuss how political, economic, and demographic factors influence aging
- Evaluate the Generational Equity Debate and its implications for the future
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Attendance.** Class attendance is expected. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned materials and prepared to actively participate in class/group discussions.

**Reading.** Students will be expected to come to class having read the assigned readings posted on blackboard.

COURSE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

*In-Class Writing Assignments:* There will be a total of three in-class writing assignments. On the day of the in-class writing assignment, students will be broken up into groups and given a prompt to discuss. Students will have 45 minutes to discuss the prompt with those in their groups. Students will break for 15 minutes. After the break, students will have the remainder of the course time to write a response to the prompt.

Write ups will be assignment a letter grade that corresponds to the following point values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Values Associated with Letter Grades:</th>
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<tr>
<td>A++: 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A: 95</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-: 92</td>
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<td>A-/B+: 90</td>
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Each write up will constitute 35% of your grade.

FINAL GRADE

The final grade for the course will be assigned on a 100-point scale. A letter grade will be assigned for the following point values:

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<th>Final Grade Scale:</th>
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<td>89.5+ pts = A</td>
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ORGANIZATION OF COURSE*

I. Theories of Aging
II. Evolution of Retirement as an Institution
**IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT I**
III. The Push and Pull factors of Retirement
IV. Retirement at the Margins
**IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT II**
V. The Generational Equity Debate
**IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT III**

*A detailed calendar of the course will be available on the first class day.*
COURSE POLICIES:

**Missed In-Class Writing Assignments:**
Every effort should be made to be present for ALL scheduled in-class writing assignments. Those dates are posted on the calendar. Should a student miss a scheduled in-class writing assignment, students will need to schedule an appointment to make up the writing assignment. They will not have the benefit of discussing the assignment with others. They will not have the benefit of using their notes. They will have 90 minutes to answer a prompt or prompts. The format of the make-up assignment will be at the professor’s discretion.

**Absences:**
Attendance is expected but will not be taken. You are an adult, responsible for your own time and your own actions. Material will be presented and discussed in class will be relevant to the prompts. It is in your interest to attend. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that regular attendance is positively correlated with grades.

**Contacting the Professor:**
Should you need to contact me, the best way to do so is via email. I check my email multiple times, daily. When you do contact me, treat your email as a formal document. Use proper grammar and punctuation. Begin your emails with a proper salutation.

**Electronic Devices:**
LAPTOPS are not permitted in my class. Should you wish to record the lectures/discussions, you must use a digital recorder. All cell phones, ipods, ipads, mp3 players, and the like should be turned off prior to class beginning.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**ACADEMIC ADVISING**
The College of Arts and Humanities requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located at Driftwood 203E and can be reached at 825.3466.

**STUDENTS with DISABILITIES**
The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at 825.5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.

**GRADE APPEAL PROCESS**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**EMAIL**
You have your very own Islander e-mail account. I will be using this account should any correspondence be necessary. All university notifications will be using your Islander account to contact you. To access your Islander email, first go to S.A.I.L. for your new student ID number. Next, go to [http://newuser.tamucc.edu](http://newuser.tamucc.edu) for your new email account. For more information call 825.561