

X Undergraduate

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5/6

REQUEST FOR  
**ADDITION OF COURSE TO  
CORE CURRICULUM**

College/School: PACS  
Department: AGER

Subject Prefix: AGER Course Number: 2250 Semester Credit Hours: 3

TCCNS Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ (common course number) Hours Per Week: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title Images of Aging Through Film and Literature \_\_\_\_\_ Lecture  
Short Course Title : Images of Aging \_\_\_\_\_ Lab  
(maximum 22 characters including spaces) \_\_\_\_\_ Recitation  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other  
\_\_\_\_\_

Category of Core Curriculum course is to be added: Discovery

Catalog Description:

Study of attitudes toward aging through depictions of the elderly in English-language films and literary works. A major goal of the course is to replace stereotypical views of the elderly with an understanding of the variety of human experience in the last decades of life.

Prerequisite(s):

none

If course is cross-listed, indicate below:

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Prefix/Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Prefix/Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for course to be added to Core Curriculum (Include how course would satisfy each exemplary objective.):

The class addresses the OAOs for Discovery in the following ways:  
1. Think critically and creatively, learning to apply different systems of analysis: Students are required to think critically and creatively and to apply different bases of analysis, including theoretical perspectives regarding aging, critically assessing the depiction of aging in film and literature – see course objective #2. The course addresses popular culture, media images, and social science theory as ways of understanding aging, in the context of film and literature depictions of older age. See course objectives #1 through #7.  
2. Engage with a variety of others in thoughtful and well crafted communication: Students must participate with one another in structured classroom and online discussions, as well as express themselves by writing papers.  
3. Be able to articulate the values that undergird their lives, the UNT community and the larger society: The course explores a wide variety of expressions of values and across social contexts. See especially course objectives #6, #7, #8, and #9.  
4. Cultivate self-awareness, balance and an openness to change: Students are asked to explore their own feelings about and views of older age and are responsible for articulating these in group discussions and individual reports. See particularly course objective #9.

Consultation with University Curriculum Assessment Committee member:

Department: AGER Contact: James H. Swan Date: 5-7-09

New Core Curriculum Requests must include:

- Syllabus:  Maximum 4-page syllabus attached  
Assessment:  Consultation w/University Curriculum Assessment Committee member in this core component group.  
 Assessment procedures (criteria to be used in assessing this course) must be attached separately

**APPROVED:**

Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

College/School Curriculum  
Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean of College/School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Core Oversight Committee  
Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

University Curriculum  
Committee (VPAA): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Nicole Dagh*  
*Debra Dickey*  
*Wendy Keeg*

*5/7/09*  
*5/7/09*  
*5/8/09*

*University of North Texas*  
AGER 2250, Spring 2009  
**Images of Aging**  
*Through Film and Literature*

**Overview:**

This course explores our impressions of old age and our attitudes towards the elderly as they are expressed in feature-length American films and short fiction. The analysis of cinematic and literary portrayals of older persons will enable students who complete this course to recognize stereotypical views of aging and to appreciate the variety of human experience that characterizes the last decades of life.

**Instructor:**

Richard A. Lusky, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Applied Gerontology  
302-B Chilton Hall  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 a.m.-12 p.m. & 5-6 p.m.; Fridays 1-3 p.m.; & by Appointment.  
Phone: (940) 565-2765 E-Mail: Use Vista Blackboard

**Goals:**

This course will review and analyze contemporary films and short stories about aging. The goals of the course are to:

- (1) Critically examine the nature, sources, accuracy & implications of collective & personal images of aging,
- (2) Improve students' analytic skills, and
- (3) Help students develop more realistic, positive and productive views of later life

**Learning Objectives:**

As a result of their participation in this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the dominant themes associated with aging in contemporary films and short stories
2. Critically assess the accuracy of the public images of aging offered in film and literature.
3. Show how our views of older persons can be shaped by the arts and humanities as reflected in portrayals of old age in cinema and literature.
4. Explore the meaning of old age using basic social, psychological and gerontological concepts.
5. Illustrate key aspects of the aging process with appropriate examples from film and literature.
6. Summarize changes in the way old age has been presented in motion pictures in recent decades.
7. Relate images of aging in the media to events taking place in the real world.
8. Describe positive and negative aspects of later life.
9. Articulate their own feelings about aging, old age, and older people.

**Organization:**

Course films, stories, facts, and concepts about old age are covered in fifteen three-hour seminars in four sections:

**Section I:** the "**breadth of the aging experience**,": issues of: (a) independence, (b) work, (c) gender relations, (d) antisocial behavior, & (e) adventures in later life.

**Section II:** "**interpersonal relations in old age**,": (a) intergenerational relations, (b) race and ethnic relations, (c) romance & sexuality, & (d) family relations.

**Section III:** "**illness, disability and death at the end of life**,": (a) widowhood & bereavement, (b) dementia & competence, (c) care for older family members, (d) challenges of institutionalization, & (e) death & dying.

**Section IV:** one modern cinematic image of "**immortality**."

**Procedures:**

**Seminars**

Each weekly seminar is devoted to viewing and analyzing a feature film about aging, drawn primarily from the 1970s through 1990s. The films illustrate weekly topics and provide a point of departure for discussion.

- A brief **film guide**, signaling key themes, events, and issues, is provided in advance for each film.
- In most weeks, **concept sheets** summarizing pertinent gerontological facts and concepts relating to the assigned topic will also be available.

Film guides and concept sheets for the coming week are posted one week in advance (after the preceding class) and remain available until class time. You should visit the web site, retrieve materials for the coming week for review before class. This will greatly improve the quality of your film viewing experience and

classroom discussion. Film guides and concept sheets will be useful throughout the course (e.g., in writing the paper and preparing for exams), so print a copy of these materials while they are available.

## Readings

You are required to read and reflect on three short stories about aging. You will discuss the first two stories in assigned online discussion groups. You will analyze the third story in a brief (4-5 page) typewritten paper which you will submit through the course website. Details on these three assignments are given below.

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. To have adequate time to view and discuss each film, we must begin class on time and employ the full class period.

- You are expected to attend each 3-hour class period
- Role will be taken each week
- Students who are not present when the role is taken will be counted as absent
- Missing a single class in this course is equivalent to missing 3 classes in a regular (MWF) course
- Since the objective of each class is to analyze a film, students who are not present for the weekly discussions will be counted as absent whether or not they have viewed the film.

## Grading

Your final course grade will be based on the points that you earn through six assignments:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum Points</u>
In-Class Participation	(0-15 points)
Online Discussion #1	(0-15 points)
Online Discussion #2	(0-15 points)
Midterm Exam	(0-15 points)
Final Examination	(0-20 points)
Short Story Analysis	(0-20 points)

Final grades will be assigned as follows: 97-100 = A+, 93-96 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 76-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 67-69 = D+, 63-66 = D, 60-62 = D-, less than 60 = F.

## Assignments

### In-Class Participation (0-15 points)

All students are expected to attend class and contribute to the classroom experience. You will receive up to 10 points for regular attendance and up to 5 additional points for the level and quality of your participation in the weekly in-class discussions. Maximize your class participation grade by:

- Attending class regularly and on time
- Reviewing film guides and available concept sheets in advance
- Having these materials available for use in class
- Being attentive to the stories, characters and events portrayed in each film.
- Volunteering your insights and interpretations of the films
- Sharing relevant experiences that you may have had with older people
- Providing thoughtful responses when called upon
- Showing courtesy to fellow students when they are expressing their ideas

### Two Online Discussions (0-15 points per discussion, for a total of up to 30 points)

You will also be required to participate in two 2-week-long discussions using the Ecampus discussion tool. Each discussion will center on a short-story about aging. To maximize opportunity for participation, the class will be broken up into 5 discussion groups of 14-15 students.

The story will be posted on the course website at the beginning of each discussion. You will have two weeks to read the story and post your contributions. You must make two types of discussion postings:

One "Original Posting." Share your thoughts about the story or some aspect of it – e.g., you might tell whether you liked the story, why or why not. Or you might summarize your view of the story's main message and how the message is communicated. You might judge how realistically the story addresses issues of aging or how successfully the characters are aging. It is good to share personal reactions to the story, but you should also explain how the story contributes to our understanding of aging. You can earn up to 10 points for your "Original Posting." Postings that employ course concepts, draw comparisons with films seen in class, and/or offer real life examples will receive more points than those that simply share feelings.

One or more "Reply Postings" to posts by other students. Replies may agree with, disagree with, or expand on points by others. You can earn up to 5 points for Reply Postings. Multiple Reply Postings, those explaining the position being taken, and those employing course concepts and/or examples will receive more points than those merely stating agreement or disagreement with other points.

Short Story Discussion #1 will begin on February 11th and conclude on February 25th. Short Story Discussion #2 will begin on March 25th, and end on April 8th.

### **Short Story Analysis (0-20 points)**

Each student will prepare a 4-5 page (double-spaced) paper analyzing one or more of three short stories that will be made available to you through the course website on April 8th. You will have three weeks to select your story, write up your analysis, and submit your paper. The paper is due no later than April 29th. It is not enough to restate or summarize the chosen story. You must employ the prescribed format to:

- (1) Identify the dominant themes in the story,
- (2) Explain how it illustrates facts, concepts, and issues presented in the handouts and in class, &
- (3) Show how such concepts help to understand the story and the aging issues it addresses.

Your paper may draw upon more than one story -- e.g., you may contrast and compare images of aging presented in two different stories, or draw examples illustrating a course concept from several stories.

To receive credit, your paper must be submitted through the course website by 2:00 p.m. on 4/29. Submit your paper as an MS Word document through the course homepage link labeled "Submit Papers/Get Feedback." Papers otherwise submitted or after the due date will not be accepted. Word is available in all campus General Access Computer Labs. Lab monitors can help you convert your document to the MS Word format. If you use Word 2007, you must "save" your paper as a Word 97-2003 "Word Document" (.doc file). To be sure that you receive proper credit, include your name in the upper left hand corner of the first page, and use the following format to name the file containing your paper - - where xxxxxx is your last name followed by the initial of your first name:

Format: xxxxx\_paper.doc

Example: luskyr\_paper.doc

Your paper must be your own work. Papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com. The program will check your work against papers submitted by students here and nationally and against articles in published literature.

### **Midterm and Final Examinations**

#### **(1-15 points for the Midterm & 0-20 points for the Final)**

There will be a midterm and a final. The midterm will occur in class on 3/11. The final will occur on Wednesday, 5/13 during regular class hours (2-5) in our regular classroom (ESAT 120). On exam days, discussion of the assigned film will be replaced by an examination comprised of approximately 10 objective questions, 2-3 short answer questions, and 1 short essay question, testing your understanding of course concepts and your ability to use them in analyzing the film -- just as in weekly discussions of the other films. It will not be sufficient to simply summarize the film in your written answers. You will be required to analyze the plot, characters and events using concepts presented in class and the handouts. The film to be used in the midterm exam is listed in the topics section of this syllabus. A handout and film guide will be provided as usual. The film used for the final exam will not be announced in advance and students will be expected to complete their exam without the benefit of an advance handout or film guide.

These tests are to be taken as "closed-book" examinations. No notes, concept sheets, film guides or exam materials should be brought to class. Students will be provided with a fresh copy of the film guide, paper for taking notes during the film, and a copy of the exam questions. Once you have finished the exam, all of these materials must be returned to the instructor. Students who do not do so will not receive credit for the exam for the examination.

### **Absence, Late Assignments and Incomplete Final Grades**

This course follows the Program's policy on incomplete coursework and final course grades of "Incomplete." The Applied Gerontology faculty has adopted the following guidelines:

1. Incompletes will be granted only in circumstances of serious illness or family disruption.
2. Students must make-up all incomplete coursework within 60 days of the start of the next semester.
3. If a final grade or other arrangements from the instructor is not received within the allotted time, the UNT Registrar will enter a Permanent Incomplete as the final course grade.

Students wishing to be excused for absences or tardy assignments will be held to the same standards and required to provide written documentation of extenuating circumstances involving serious illness or family disruption.

### **Blackboard Vista Site:**

Course materials are available on the internet through UNT's Ecampus website. On the course homepage are links to: **the Syllabus, Weekly Film Guides and Concept Sheets, Assigned Short Stories, Discussion areas, Tools for Course E-mail and Submitting Written Assignments, and Optional Resources.**

### **ADA Statement:**

UNT's Gerontology Program, in cooperation with UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation, complies with the American Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have

not registered with ODA, you are encouraged to do so. If you have a qualifying disability and need accommodation, please submit your written accommodation request to the instructor on or before the twelfth class day. If you experience any problems in securing reasonable accommodations, please contact the ODA.



## I. BREADTH OF THE AGING EXPERIENCE



Wk1	1/21	Successful Aging	<u>Nobody's Fool</u> (1995)
Wk2	2/28	Retirement	<u>As Young As You Feel</u> (1951)
Wk3	2/4	Women in Later Life	<u>Strangers in Good Company</u> (1990)
Wk4	2/11	Crime & Antisocial Behavior -Online Discussion #1 Begins-	<u>Atlantic City</u> (1980)
Wk5	2/18	Late Life Adventures	<u>Harry and Tonto</u> (1974)



## II. SOCIAL RELATIONS IN LATER LIFE



Wk6	2/25	Intergenerational Relations -Online Discussion #1 Ends-	<u>Harold and Maude</u> (1972)
Wk7	3/4	Race & Ethnic Relations	<u>Driving Miss Daisy</u> (1989)
Wk8	3/11	Family Relations -Midterm Examination-	<u>On Golden Pond</u> (1981)
	3/18	SPRING BREAK!	
Wk9	3/25	Romance & Sexuality -Online Discussion #2 Begins-	<u>Grumpy Old Men</u> (2003)



## III. IMAGES OF ILLNESS, DISABILITY AND DEATH



Wk10	4/1	Widowhood & Bereavement	<u>The Cemetery Club</u> (1993)
Wk11	4/8	Dementia & Competence -Online Discussion #2 Ends- -Short Stories Distributed-	<u>Piano for Mrs. Cimino</u> (1982)
Wk12	4/15	Caregiving	<u>Dad</u> (1989)
Wk13	4/22	Institutionalization	<u>Age Old Friends</u> (1989)
Wk14	4/29	Death & Dying -Short Story Paper Due-	



## IV. BEYOND OLD AGE



Wk15	5/6	Immortality	<u>Cocoon</u> (1985)
Wk16	5/13	Final Examination	To Be Determined

Discovery Assessment Plan for  
AGER 2250: Images of Aging

The class assesses the OAOs in terms of adequate student achievement by at least 70% of students on the following:

The class addresses the OAOs for Discovery in the following ways:

1. Think critically and creatively, learning to apply different systems of analysis. Students must demonstrate critical and creative thinking regarding depictions in film and literature, as well as “Explore the meaning of old age using basic social, psychological and gerontological concepts.” All points of grading assess student ability to understand such connections in terms of popular culture, media images, and social science theory, in the context of film and literature depictions of older age.
2. Engage with a variety of others in thoughtful and well crafted communication. Discussion Board posts and class Seminar discussions are highly structured to require such behavior, and involve assessment of the ability to undertake it.
3. Be able to articulate the values that undergird their lives, the UNT community and the larger society: Class objectives #8 and #9 state: “Describe positive and negative aspects of later life”; and “Articulate their own feelings about aging, old age, and older people.” Students are asked to articulate their own feelings about and views of older age particularly in Discussion Board posts and class Seminar discussions, and are assessed as to their doing this.
4. Cultivate self-awareness, balance and an openness to change: Students are asked to explore their own feelings about and views of older age and are assessed regarding their articulation of these in structured group discussions and individual reports. See particularly course objective #9.