

**University of North Texas**  
**Applied Gerontology**  
**AGER 4800**  
**THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF AGING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

Times	Internet	Instructor:	James H. Swan
Class Room	Internet	Phone:	(940) 565-5434
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Office Hours	Tues., 3-5, or by arrangement		

### **Description**

Analysis of the aging experience in a global context, historically and currently. Topics include perceptions of aging, definition of need in old age, and models for delivering health and social services to older persons. *Satisfies the Social Sciences requirement of the University Core Curriculum.*

### **Expected Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe issues of the diversity of culture and family contexts of aging in the world.
2. Relate issues of private and public policies and programs for aging in the world.
3. Delineate major theories applicable to the social context of aging in a diverse world.
4. Outline differences in aging and in response to aging across various nations.
5. Appreciate differences by political and cultural contexts around the world in responding to the needs of older persons.
6. Discuss issues in lifestyle, needs, access to care, and service delivery relating to elders in different countries.
7. Understand the importance of issues of diversity as they relate to the world's aged populations.

### **TEXT**

Sokolovsky. 2009. *The Cultural Context of Aging: Worldwide Perspectives*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

There are additional readings, which will be made available, mostly through the course website.

## Course Format

This is an online class. The instructor will present perspectives on weekly topics, but interaction will occur via the discussion board on the class web-site. Each student will also prepare periodic assignments.

### Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The course requirements and grading criteria are: % of Grade

1. Midterm Exam – two weeks to respond	25%
2. Term Paper -- (see below)	30%
3. Discussion Board	25%
4. Periodic Assignments	20%

**Exams:** An essay test will cover both materials in required readings and anything I discuss in lecture. The exam will be posted on the web site, two weeks before the due date. E-mail responses to the address listed in this syllabus ([swan@unt.edu](mailto:swan@unt.edu)), **NOT to the WEBCTVISTA e-mail address.**

**Term paper:** A term paper (8 to 10 pages) will be required, covering a topic from the class, and related to the literature and to theory, descriptions, and other materials from the class. A topic statement is due by February 3; an outline by February 17; a tentative bibliography (at least 8 entries) by March 16, and the paper by May 3. **Please submit in Microsoft Word, double spaced.** Please include your last name in the filename. Statements of fact, data, and opinion of others must be supported by citations, in one of two forms: 1) in-text, with author and year in parentheses; or 2) numbered citations in order of appearance, with corresponding numbering in the references. Exact restatement of another's work is quotation, should be indicated and cited (in-text citations of quotes include page numbers of the quotes). Overenthusiastic quotation without attribution (plagiarism) is grounds at least for severe reduction in grade. Cite sources of assertions that are not either: (1) your own opinion, or (2) widely-known or common-sense knowledge (if in doubt, cite). Proper citation of sources does enter into the grade. A reference section at the end should list **only sources cited**. Tables from other sources or from others' data should have citations on the table and be listed in the reference section. At least some sources should be from the peer-reviewed literature: at least 5 such sources for graduate students, at least 3 for undergraduates. Web citations are fine, but be prepared to defend the validity of the source; provide the URL, and note when you last accessed the site. Citations of books are fine, but note that most books are not peer-reviewed literature. **The textbook is not an acceptable source.** Other documents, particularly organizational documents, are acceptable. Citations of interviews you have conducted are also acceptable. The paper will be graded on the quality of your sources (including adequacy of references provided), the organization and the quality of the paper.

**Periodic Assignments:** In lieu of student presentations that would be required in the classroom, students are to submit two short papers (2-4 pages each), covering topics from the second half of the class. Follow the rules for the term paper in regards to citations and sources; but the textbook CAN be used as a source in the short papers.

**Discussion Board:** Topics will be posted to the class web site's discussion board, generally per class session. You are responsible for participating in discussions. You can start your own threads under each topic.

## Course Outline and Required Readings

1. Introduction: An Aging World **January 17-20**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Pp. 1-12, Chapt. 1**  
 Recommended: Kinsella & Phillips, 2005, *Global Aging: The Challenge of Success*, Washington, DC, Population Reference Bureau, *Population Bulletin* 60(1), March.
  
2. Why Aging in the World? **January 23-27**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 3.**  
 Recommended: You et al., 2010, Familial transmission of longevity among the oldest old in China, *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 29(3): 308-32.
  
3. Views of Aging Around the World **January 30-February 3**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 8-9**  
 Recommended: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 6.
  
4. Life Courses Around the World **February 6-10**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 10-11.**  
 Recommended: Ben-Shlomo & Kuh, 2002, A life course approach to chronic disease epidemiology: conceptual models, empirical challenges and interdisciplinary perspectives, *International Journal of Epidemiology* 31(2): 285-93.
  
5. The Global Environment of Aging **February 13-17**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 14, 29, 31.**  
 Recommended: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 16, 24.
  
6. Social Support and World Aging **February 20-24**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 15, 20**  
 Recommended: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 2, 17.
  
7. Family in an Aging World **February 27-March 2**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 28, 30, 45**  
 Recommended: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 22, 40.
  
8. Roles of Aging Around the World **March 5-9**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 21, 23.**  
 Recommended: Knodel et al., 2010, the role of parents and family members in ART treatment adherence: evidence from Thailand, *Research on Aging* 32(1): 19-39.
  
9. Government Programs and Aging **March 12-16**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 19.**  
 Recommended: Gruber & Wise, 1998, Social security and retirement: an international comparison, *The American Economic Review* 88(2): 158-63.  
 Apt, 2002, Ageing and the changing role of the family and the community: an African perspective, *International Social Security Review* 55(1): 39-47.

10. Social Programs for Aging in the World **March 26-30**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chaps 18.**  
 Recommended: Plath, 2009, International policy perspectives on independence in old age, *Journal of Aging & Social Policy* 21(2): 209-23.
11. Health and Aging in a World Context **April 2-6**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chaps 38, 41, 42.**  
 Recommended: Berraho et al., 2010, Body mass index, disability, and 13-year mortality in older French adults, *Journal of Aging & Health* 22(1): 68-83.  
 Agrawal, 2010, Morbidity prevalence and healthcare utilization among older adults in India, *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 29(2): 155-79.  
 Fillenbaum et al., 2010, Prevalence and correlates of functional status in an older community-representative sample in Brazil, *Journal of Aging & Health* 22(3): 362-83.
12. International Long-Term Care **April 9-13**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chaps. 43**  
 Recommended: Sokolovsky, Chapt. 44.  
 Hungwe, 2010, Evaluating older persons' perceptions on their quality of life in an old peoples' institution: a Zimbabwean case study, *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 29(3): 333-51.
13. Aging Communities **April 16-20**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chaps. 31, 32**
14. End of Life Issues Internationally **April 23-27**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, Chaps 5.**  
 Recommended: Ahmedzai et al., 2004, A new international framework for palliative care, *European Journal of Cancer* 40(15): 2192-2200.
15. The Future of World Aging **April 30-May 3**  
**TERM PAPER DUE**  
**Required: Sokolovsky, pp. 491-503, Chapt. 39.**  
 Recommended: Palacios, 2002, The future of global ageing, *International Journal of Epidemiology* 31(4): 786-91.
16. Finals Week **May 7-11**  
 (You should be done here, so go work on your other classes.)