

**University of North Texas**  
**Applied Gerontology**  
**AGER 4450**  
**FAMILY IN LATER LIFE**

Times	Internet	Instructor: James H. Swan
Class Room	Internet	Phone: (940) 565-3454
Office:	Chilton 302E	E-Mail <a href="mailto:swan@unt.edu">swan@unt.edu</a>
Office Hours	Tues., 3-5, or by arrangement	

**About the Professor / Instructor**

Dr. Swan's has a Ph.D. in sociology is from Northwestern University (1981). He has been a Professor of Applied Gerontology at the University of North Texas since 2004. His major research area has been long-term care finance and policy but has in recent years developed research in physical activity & aging. His career has been in applied areas: doing health services research, and teaching in health administration, public health, and gerontology programs. Professionally, he has oriented to public health, long being active in the Aging and Public Health Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and served several years as one of that section's APHA Governing Councilors. In Texas, he has been active in the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA), currently as its President, on its executive board, governing council, and conference-planning committee. Dr. Swan has maintained a steady and active publication record for three decades, and annually presents at the APHA conference and other conferences. Dr. Swan's teaching interests have especially focused on research, social policy in aging, health and aging, and aging services. He has a strong commitment to global aging (and has taught courses in Mexico and Nigeria).

**Syllabus and Timeline Change Policy**

All important information for this course should be able to be found either in this **Syllabus** or the accompanying **Timeline** (found at the end of the syllabus). Therefore, most questions about this course and the guidelines should be able to be answered with these two documents. The University attorney advises faculty members to notify students that the syllabus and timeline used for this course are not contracts and are therefore subject to change. The goal is to adhere to the schedules provided, but it is important to note that changes may be necessary to meet unforeseen needs and events. Announcements will be sent to let everyone know of any changes.

**Course Pre-requisites:** SOCI 1510 or equivalent.

### **Access and Log in Information**

This course was developed and will be facilitated utilizing the University of North Texas' Learning Management System, Blackboard Learn. To get started with the course, please go to: <https://learn.unt.edu>

You will need your EUID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your EUID or have forgotten your password, please go to: <http://ams.unt.edu>.

### **Student Resources**

As a student, you will have access to:

- Student Orientation via Blackboard Learn. It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials within the Orientation to better equip you in navigating the course.
- Blackboard's [On Demand Learning Center for Students](#). It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials to better equip you to navigate the course.
- From within Blackboard, you will have access to the “*UNT Helpdesk*” tab which provides student resources and Help Desk Information.

### **Being a Successful Online Student**

-[What Makes a Successful Online Student?](#)

-[Self Evaluation for Potential Online Students](#)

### **How the Course is Organized**

Relevant information is located on the home page. This course is structured with weekly lectures from the instructor, plus weekly reading assignments from the required textbook and weekly required and recommended additional readings, plus weekly topics on the discussion board. Posting on the discussion board is a required and graded part of the course; and for an online class, “attendance in class” is defined as posting on the discussion board. Testing is via a midterm essay exam. Students are required to do a term paper plus an additional short paper or article review.

### **What Should Students Do First?**

Students should first complete the Zip Code Survey located on the course home page then carefully read the syllabus regarding course

requirements and assignments and note the timeline and particular assignment and exam

due dates. Students may make introductions by posting to other students their greetings on the discussion board. Any questions or queries may be directed to the instructor using the course email system.

**How Students Should Proceed Each Week for Class Activities** All weekly instructor lectures are in a folder off the home page, as are the weekly discussion board topics, and as are any recommended readings not in the textbook. Students should submit all assignments by their due dates. The completed midterm and both papers are to be emailed to the instructor at [swan@unt.edu](mailto:swan@unt.edu). Specific instructions regarding preparing and submitting assignments are given below.

### **Student Support**

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of Blackboard and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Email: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

Phone: 940.565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Regular hours are maintained to provide support to students. Please refer to the website (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/hours.htm>) for updated hours.

### **Description**

Later stages in the family life cycle are surveyed with emphasis on changing family composition, role transitions and support systems.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Through readings, online discussion, and lectures, a student should be able to:

1. Provide a general description of the key issues related to stages of family composition in later life.
2. Understand the myths about the role of the elder in the family.
3. Understand the issues related to supportive services and systems.
4. Identify gerontological theories of aging.
5. Understand the relationships and role transitions of the late stage family life cycle.
6. Be able to advocate for the needs of elders and their family members.

## TEXT

Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. 2009. *Family Ties & Aging*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage. (Students may use the first edition, published 2001.) Additional readings will be made available 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 submit written assignments by email.

### Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The course requirements and grading criteria are:	<u>% of Grade</u>
1. Midterm Exam – two weeks to respond	30%
2. Term Paper -- (see below)	35%
3. Short Paper	10%
4. Discussion Board	25%

**Exam:** 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 Learn 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 13; an outline by March 6; a tentative bibliography (at least 8 entries) by March 27, and the paper by May 7. **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 overall quality.

**Short Paper:** In lieu of student presentations that would be required in the classroom, students are to submit a short paper (2-4 pages), covering a topic from 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: Elders in Family Context **January 20-23**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 3-24.**
2. Availability of Family Ties **January 26-30**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 25-49.**  
Recommended: Isengard, B., M. Szydlik. 2012. Living apart (or) together? Coresidence of elderly parents and their adult children in Europe. *Research on Aging* 34(4): 449-474.
3. Intimate Ties **February 2-6**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 53-63.**  
Recommended: Amin, I. 2014. Social capital and sexual risk-taking behaviors among older adults in the United States. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. DOI: 10.1177/0733464814547048. Pp. 1-18. [Not yet in print.]  
Kim, J., L.J. Waite. 2014. Relationship quality and shared activity in marital and cohabiting dyads in the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project, Wave 2. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 69(new): 1-11. Doi:10.1093/geronb/gbu038. [Not yet in print.]

4. Intimate Partnerships **February 9-13**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 65-92.**  
Recommended: Feld, S., R.E. Dunkle, T. Schroepfer, Huei-Wern Shen. 2010. Does gender moderate factors associated with whether spouses are the sole providers of IADL care to their partners? *Research on Aging* 32(4) 499–526.

**Term Paper Topic Due**

5. Being Single **February 16-20**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 93-106.**  
Recommended: Lahad, K., H. Hazan. 2014. The terror of the single old maid: on the insolubility of a cultural category. *Women's Studies International Forum* 47(6): 127-36.

6. Widowhood **February 23-27**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 107-118.**  
Recommended: Strohschein, L. 2011. Spousal bereavement as a triggering mechanism for a loss of residential independence among Canadian seniors. *Research on Aging* 33(5): 576-97.

**Midterm Exam Posted**

7. Divorce/Remarriage/Other Arrangements **March 2-6**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 118-134**  
Recommended: van der Pas, S., T.G. van Tilburg, M. Silverstein. 2013. Stepfamilies in later life. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(5): 1065-9.

**Term Paper Outline Due**

8. Intergenerational Relationships **March 9-13**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 137-152.**  
Recommended: Kim, K., D.J. Eggebeen, S.H. Zarit, K.S. Birditt, K.L. Fingerman. 2013. Agreement between aging parent's bequest intention and middle-aged child's inheritance expectation. *The Gerontologist* 53(6): 1020-31.

**Midterm Exam Due**

- Spring Break **March 16-22**

9. Family Support **March 23-27**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 153-177.**  
Recommended: Funk, L.M., N.L. Chappell, G. Liu. 2013.  
Associations between filial responsibility and caregiver well-being: are there differences by cultural group? *Research on Aging* 35(1): 78-95.  
Lai, D.W.L. 2010. Filial piety, caregiving appraisal, and caregiving burden. *Research on Aging* 32(2): 200-23.  
**Term Paper Bibliography Due**  
**Short Paper Due**
10. Childless and/or Living Alone **March 30-April 3**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 179-186.**  
Recommended: Haslbeck, J.W., R. McCorkle, D. Schaeffer. 2012.  
Chronic illness self-management while living alone in later life: a systematic integrative review. *Research on Aging* 34(5): 507-47.
11. Grandparents and Grandchildren **April 6-10**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 187-204.**  
Recommended: Fruhauf, C.A., K. Bundy-Fazioli, J.L. Miller. 2012. Larimer County Alliance for Grandfamilies: a collaborative approach to meeting a community need. *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 31(2): 193-214.  
Prokos, A.H., J.R. Keene. 2012. The life course and cumulative disadvantage: poverty among grandmother-headed families. *Research on Aging* 34(5): 592-621.
12. Intergenerational Impacts of Marital Status **April 13-17**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 204-222.**  
Recommended: Carr, D., K. Boerner. 2013. Dating after late-life spousal loss: does it compromise relationships with adult children? *Journal of Aging Studies* 27(4): 487-98.  
Sherman, C.W., N.J. Webster, T.C. Antonucci. 2013. Dementia caregiving in the context of late-life remarriage: support networks, relationship quality, and well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(5): 1149-63.
13. Sibling Ties and Elders **April 20-24**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 225-240.**  
Recommended: Spitze, G., R. Ward, G. Deane, Y. Zhuo. 2012. Cross-sibling effects in parent-adult child exchanges of socioemotional support. *Research on Aging* 34(2): 197-221.  
Tolkacheva, N., M.B. van Groenou, T. van Tilburg. 2010. Sibling influence on care given by children to older parents. *Research on Aging* 32(6): 739-59.

14. Life Transitions and Family Ties **April 27-May 1**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 241-255.**  
Recommended: Scott, A.M., J.P. Caughlin. 2012. Managing multiple goals in family discourse about end-of-life health decisions. *Research on Aging* 34(6): 670-91.

15. Research and Policy **May 4-7**  
**Required: Connidis, Pages 259-290.**  
Recommended: Redfoot, D., L. Feinberg, A. Houser. 2013. *The Aging of the Baby Boom and the Growing Care Gap: A Look at Future Declines in the Availability of Family Caregivers*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, Insight on the Issues 85, August.

**TERM PAPER DUE**

16. **FINAL EXAM DUE** **May 15**