

# SOCI 545 <sup>1</sup>

## Course Title: Current Issues in Health, Aging and Society

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**Instructor: Dr. Simon Carroll**

### Course Description:

This course will investigate contemporary critical theoretical and political economy approaches to aging. We will cover important health issues related to aging from a perspective that interrogates the social construction of aging, exploring how class, race, gender and sexual orientation are related to the intersectional production of social and health inequities over the lifecourse and culminating in disparate health outcomes for older adults.

We will begin with a critical history of gerontology as a discipline, bringing us up to date with the latest thinking within the field and beyond when it comes to addressing the so-called 'aging society'. We will explore political economy and state theoretical approaches to the demographics of aging and the way in which long-term trends in individualization have challenged support for collective provision of social security and adequate living conditions for older adults.

Finally, we will make the relationship between aging and technology a central focus as we look at techno-utopian 'solutions' to an aging population. This will mean thinking together about how technology development and implementation is dominated by capital accumulation priorities, leaving substantive collective societal goals as an afterthought or an incidental impact. It also means challenging dominant ageist narratives about older people and technology, which ends up justifying their exclusion from issues of appropriate technological co-design.

### Course Outcomes/Objectives:

- To learn about how sociological thinking has intersected with gerontology and helped shape how we think about aging in society
- To explore connections between theories of political economy and how we treat aging and finance the security of older adults
- To identify intersectional process of social inequity that lead to health inequities for older adults
- To understand how technology has become central to how we approach aging and what are some of the major challenges for thinking critically about this relationship.

### Course Pre/Co-requisites:

None

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<sup>1</sup> This online outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.

**Topics May Include:**

Critical gerontology

Healthy Aging discourse

Political economy and Aging

Theories of the state and Aging

Intersectionality and Aging

Gender, Sex and Aging

Class and Aging

Aging and Technology

**Required Resources May Include:**

All course materials will be posted as links on Brightspace