

Course Syllabus
RGT 2951H The Silver Tsunami: Ethical-Theological Reflections on Aging
Regis College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2016

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bridget Champion, PhD, Instructor
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Course Identification

Course Number: RGT 2951H L0101
Course Name: The Silver Tsunami: Ethical-Theological Reflections on Aging
Course Location: tba
Class Times: Mondays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

Because of advances in nutrition, hygiene and medicine, more people are living longer lives than ever before. For individuals to live to old age was once considered a blessing; currently to have population aging of this magnitude – the “silver tsunami” – is seen as a destructive demographic development. Using a case-based approach and a combination of lectures and directed discussion, this course will explore issues associated with aging from an ethical-theological perspective. Topics will include: what it means to age as individuals and as populations; ageism and elder abuse; the fight against aging; institutionalization of elders; building age-friendly communities; poverty and aging; aging in a global context; a theology of aging. Students will be evaluated on two reflection papers; one clay model and explanatory paper; written final examination; class participation.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

Please see assigned readings in the Course Schedule.

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access

to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask [xxx] for further help.]

- Personal Website <http://individual.utoronto.ca/jsmith>

Course Learning Objectives

College Regis

BD Level

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (Not all categories will be required for all courses.)

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS students will develop:

- critical thinking skills through case work and directed discussion, and through the assigned reflection papers;
- effective communication skills through in-class discussions and assigned reflection papers;
- the ability to marshal factual information from a variety of disciplines through lectures and assigned readings;
- creative ways of framing basic concepts through the symbolic representations of their clay model assignment and explanatory papers;
- the ability to work collaboratively to moral, theological and personal insight through directed in-class discussions.

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES through the readings and lectures students will:

- engage in Moral Theology as they work through ethical issues in aging;
- develop a pastoral sensibility as they apply knowledge of ethics and theology to life situations in the case discussions;
- ultimately work towards developing a Theology of Aging.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION students will have the opportunity:

- to become aware of personal assumptions and biases operative in their own understandings of aging, older persons and older populations;
- to consider life-giving ethical-theological approaches to issues raised by aging;
- to dialogue about issues in aging, theology, ethics, and personal moral and spiritual development in a forum that promotes academic rigor, collaboration and mutual respect.

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP students will develop:

- a familiarity with issues in aging;
- the capacity to bring critical thinking and a pastoral sensibility to those issues;
- the ability to view those issues in light of a Theology of Aging.

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas.

- (1) Two 3-5 page reflection papers (15% each) – Writing in the first person, students will work through assigned questions, seeking depth and insight.
- (2) One clay model with one 2-3 page explanatory paper and brief class presentation (25%) – Thinking in terms of symbols, students will create and present to the class a model depicting their understanding of old age, and hand in a short explanatory paper. The specific expectations will be set out in the assignment. Materials will be provided.
- (3) Final written examination (30%) – Students will be evaluated on their their understanding of course content as presented through assigned readings, lectures and in-class discussions, and their ability to work through issues in aging as seen through an ethical-theological perspective in a way that is critical and insightful.
- (4) Class Participation (15%) – Students will be evaluated on their contributions to in-class discussions, with quality of remarks given priority over quantity.

Grading System

A+ (90-100)
A (85-89)
A- (80-84)
B+ (77-79)
B (73-76)
B- (70-72)
Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Late work (AD). To insert.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks>) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>. A student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up a utoronto email address which is entered in the ROSI system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Monday, September 12 Course introduction; Introduction to Aging
Reading: Gilbert Meilaender, "Thinking About Aging," *First Things* (April 2011), pp. 37-43 <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/503367> ; Barry Hoffmaster, "What Does Vulnerability Mean?" *Hastings Center Report* 36.2 (2006), pp. 38-45
<http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/3528401> ; Pope Francis, "Meeting of the Pope with the Elderly in Saint Peter's Square"
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/september/documents/papa-francesco_20140928_incontro-anziani.html

Week 2

Monday, September 19 Topic: Ageism
Reading: Ashton Applewhite, "How I Became an Older Person in Training," *Generations* 39.3 (2015), pp. 64-67
<http://search.proquest.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/1750054630?accountid=14771> ; Zachary Davis, "Aging and Social Justice: A Phenomenological Investigation," *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry* 4 (2004), pp. 46-54
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/204771335?accountid=14771>

Week 3

Monday, September 26 Topic: The Fight Against Aging
Reading: Arthur L. Caplan, "Death as an Unnatural Process: Why is it Wrong to Seek a Cure for Aging?" *EMBO reports* 6 (2005), pp. S72-S75 doi: 10.1938/sj.embor.740035; Beatriz Cardone, "'Healthy Ageing' Policies and Anti-Ageing Ideologies and Practices: On the Exercise of Responsibility," *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 11 (2008), pp. 475-483 doi: 10.1007/s11019-088-9129-z; Martha B. Holstein, "A Feminist Perspective on Anti-aging Medicine," *Generations* 25 (2001/2002), pp. 38-43
<http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/60080285?accountid=14771> .

Week 4

Monday, October 3 Topic : The Frail Elderly
Reading: Paul Higgs and Chris Gilleard, "Frailty, Abjection and the 'Othering' of the Fourth Age," *Health Sociology Review* 23 (2014), pp. 10-19
<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/496057> ; Frits de Lange, "Loving Later Life: Aging and the Love Imperative," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 33 (2013), pp. 169-184
<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/494949> .

Week 5

Monday, October 17 Topic: Aging in Place
Reading: Janice Blanchard, "Aging in Community: the Communitarian

Alternative to Aging in Place, Alone," *Generations* 14.4 (2013), pp. 6-13 <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/497928> ; Leila Shelton, "The Role of Older People in Our Communities," *Nursing Ethics* 10 (2003), pp. 4-17 doi: 10.1191/0969733003ne5700a; Pope Francis, "Holy Mass for the Elderly" http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140928_omelia-anziani.html

Week 6

Monday, October 31

Topic: Elder-Friendly Communities

Reading: Verena H. Menec, et. al., "Conceptualizing Age-Friendly Communities," *Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue canadienne du vieillissement* 30 (2010), pp. 479-493 doi:10.1017/S0714980811000237; Alexander K. Smith, Bernard Lo and Louise Aronson, "Elder Self-Neglect – How Can a Physician Help?" *The New England Journal of Medicine* 369.26 (Dec 26 2013), pp. 2476-2479 doi: 10.1956/NEJMp1310684.

Week 7

Monday, November 7

Topic: Aging and Poverty

Reading: Toba Bryant, et.al., "What Do Canadian Seniors Say Supports Their Quality of Life: Findings from a National Participatory Research Study," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 95(2004), pp. 299-303 <http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/41995928> ; Durrenda Nash Onolemhemen, "Meeting the Challenges of Urban Aging: Narratives of Poor Elderly Women of Detroit," *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 52 (2009), pp. 729-743 doi: 10.1080/01634370902914794.

Week 8

Monday, November 14

Topic: Institutionalization of Elders

Reading: Patrick J. Doyle and Robert L. Rubinstein, "Person-Centered Dementia Care and the Cultural Mix of Othering," *The Gerontologist* 54.6 (2013), pp. 952-963 doi:10.1093/geront/gnt081; Judith D. Hart, "Evaluating Long-Term Care Through the Humanbecoming Lens," *Nursing Science Quarterly* 28 (2015), pp. 280-283 doi: 10.1177/089431184; Kate de Medeiros and Patrick J. Doyle, "Remembering the *Person* in Person-Centered Residential Dementia Care," *Generations* 37.3 (2013), pp. 83-86 <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/503456> .

Week 9

Monday, November 21

Topic: The Silver Tsunami: Aging and Resource Allocation

Reading: Nora K. Bell, "What Setting Limits May Mean: A Feminist Critique of Daniel Callahan's *Setting Limits*," *Hypatia* 4 (1989), pp. 169-178 doi:10.2307/3809813; Clare M. Clarke, "Rationing Scarce Life-Sustaining Resources on the Basis of Age," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 35 (2001), pp. 799-814 doi: 10.0046/j.1365-2648.2001.01913; Ruud ter Meulen, "Are There Limits to Solidarity with the Elderly?" *Hastings Center Report* 24.5 (Sept/Oct 1994), pp. 36-38 <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.co/url.cfm/503455> .

Week 10

Monday, November 28 Topic: Presentation of Models
Reading: N/A

Week 11

Monday December 5 Topic: Aging in a Global Context
Reading: Frits de Lange, "The Dignity of the Old: Towards a Global Ethic of Aging," *International Journal of Public Theology* 3 (2009), pp. 204-221 doi:10.1163/156973209X416007; Priya Shetty, "Grey Matter: Ageing in Developing Countries," *The Lancet* 379 (April 7-13 2012), pp. 1285-7 doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60541-8.

Week 12

Monday, December 12 Topic: The Possibility of a Theology of Aging
Reading: John Paul II, "Letter to the Elderly" http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_01101999_elderly.html; Lucien Richard, "Towards a Theology of Aging," *Science et Esprit* 34 (1982), pp. 269-287 <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=7&sid=f0b474c3-957c-4764-952b-3306e1078036%40sessionmgr101&hid=124>.

Exam Week

TBD