

Why study about old people?

- Provides an opportunity to understand what can be done to assist older people
- Helps us anticipate what to expect as we grow older
- Assists those of us who will be working with the elderly in the future either as co-workers, customers, patients, etc.

Putting the course in context:

What is the **Sociology of Aging**?

Sociology is a Social Science.

What is Science (hint: there are at least two major components)?

The development of knowledge, ultimately presented in the form of laws and **theories** and gained through a systematic examination of facts (**research methods**).

What is the purpose of science?

To distinguish what is **real** from what is **illusion** (we have a **theory** of what we believe to be real and we use **research methods** to determine if the theory is true or "real.")

Why do I "enjoy" contributing to social theory?

And, so what is the purpose of the Sociology of Aging?

To gain knowledge and generate theories about:

aging and how it is affected by society and how it affects society.

The theories and knowledge are examined using scientific research methods.

A Shifting Perspective of the elderly

Older people used to be highly respected (lets say prior to 1900s) but eventually much of that respect dwindled.

Why were they once respected more so than today?

Why aren't they respected as much today as years past?

A Shifting Perspective of the elderly

Prior to industrialization, knowledge was passed on from person to person.

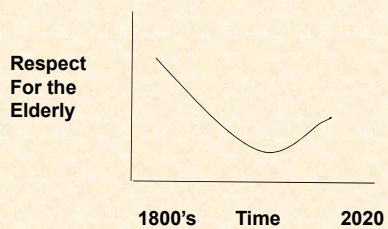
The elderly were the knowledge holders as well as land owners.

More recently the elderly are no longer the knowledge holders. This is obtained through schooling taken advantage of by younger workers.

Most recently the elderly have been gaining in prestige.

Why might this be?
(see chart, next slide)

Are older people respected? How has respect for the elderly changed over time, lets say from the 1800s to today?



A Shifting Perspective of the elderly

Wealth from investments and retirement programs.



Size of the Elderly Population

The elderly population has continued to grow as a proportion of the whole population.

Why?

Size of the Elderly Population

- The elderly are living longer
- Improved Medical care is keeping the elderly alive longer
- Baby boom generation has started filling the ranks of old age

Who are the baby boom generation?
Why "baby boom" generation?

The baby boom generation is having a variety of effects on American society

Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964.

What kinds of effects would you guess the baby boom generation has had on society as it has aged?

The pig in a python?

The baby boom generation is having a variety of effects referred to as:

The pig in a python:

- hospital delivery rooms
- public schools
- Food
- Jobs
- Housing
- Stock market
- Services for the elderly

ROME - Rita Levi Montalcini, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, said that, even though she is about to turn 100, her mind is sharper than it was when she was 20.

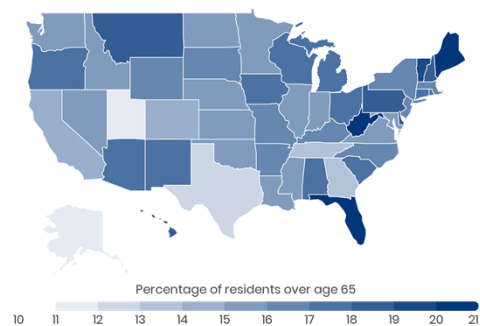
(what allows one to live a long life?)

genes, low stress, physical/eating habits



Which states have the highest percentage of elderly?

States with the Oldest Populations



Source: United States Census Bureau

2019 data

What is meant by "life expectancy" for a particular nation?

How would you guess the "life expectancy in the U.S. compares to other more technologically "advanced" nations (e.g., France, Great Britain, Germany, Canada)?

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In 1950 the U.S. had the longest life expectancy of any advanced nation.

In 2020 the U.S. is at the bottom of advanced nations in terms of life expectancy.

Why might this be?

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Hillier and Barrow (authors of your book) attribute it to more smoking and obesity in the U.S. than other nations.

Another more direct reason, that they overlook, is that all other advanced nations established national health care around the 1950s.

The U.S. does not have a national health care system. Instead, it is a system where health care providers seek to make a profit from those needing care (people in the U.S. die because they can't afford needed health care services).

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I Was 80 Years Old For A Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTmDdWSX2mQ>

(7:40 minutes)

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