

Sociology of Aging

Possible Essay Questions for Test 4:

Test 4 covers chapters 14, 15, and PowerPoints related to chapter 12 (you are not responsible for reading chapter 12). Unless otherwise notified, 4 of the following questions will be randomly selected for the test. Be sure to answer all parts of the question (it will help if you use the letters when answering). The grade will depend on how well the answer reflects what is discussed in the text, PowerPoint slides, and has been discussed in class.

UPDATED: April 29, 2025

(I am not planning on making any additional changes)

Chapter 14: Death and Dying

1. (a) Why is the topic of death a taboo, that is, rarely discussed? Provide at least three reasons. (b) Why do people fear death? Provide at least three reasons noted in class. (c) What is assisted suicide? (d) What are some reasons for opposing assisted suicide?
2. (a) What is assisted suicide? (b) Is it legal in the U.S.? (c) What is physician-assisted suicide? Is it legal and how is it typically accomplished? (d) Hillier and Barrow note requirements that have been established in at least one state before physician-assisted suicide can be done. What are these?
3. (a) How did the “Cruzan” case, described by Hillier and Barrow, influence future policy/decisions regarding “right to die”? (b) In the case of Schaivo what would you have done and why? (c) What is an advanced directive? What does it typically include (provide at least three)? Describe each.
4. (a) Elizabeth Kubler-Ross’s famous research findings proposed that a person goes through five stages once learning that they are terminally ill. Describe each of the stages. (b) What is the difference between passive euthanasia and assisted suicide? (c) Provide examples. (d) What is voluntary and involuntary euthanasia?
5. (a) What is the purpose of hospice? (b) Who receives it? (c) What and how is it typically provided? (d) Where? (e) For how long? (f) How is it often funded? Be sure to discuss changes in 1982. (g) How does Hillier and Barrow define “palliative” care? How is it different from hospice? (h) What is “informed consent?”

Chapter 15: Politics, Policies, and Programs

6. Peltzman analyzed the U.S. General Social Survey data from 1974 to 2018. (a) Who did he find to be more politically conservative: younger or older people (based on the respondents' own perceptions)? (b) Describe at least two explanations. (c) Please be sure to also provide examples for each explanation. (d) Other than age, what do you think is the most important factor influencing the older persons political views. Be sure to provide support for your answer.
7. For each of AARP and Gerontological Society of America, provide the following: (a) who their members are, (b) what their goals are, (c) how they are funded and (d) what they offer/do for their members.
8. (a) What agency was initially created through the Older Americans Act of 1965? According to Hillier and Barrow, what is its purposes? (b) Describe what exists today because of this Act. More specifically, what agencies have been created as a result of the Older Americans Act? (c) How are they funded? (d) What is the purpose of each? (e) What are the two major services they provide/receive funds for? (f) provide multiple examples of each.
9. (a-f) Describe six services offered by Area Agencies on Aging, including what each service provides and why the service is important. (g) Who are the people particularly targeted? Are services restricted to a particular group? Explain.
10. (a) Name and define three possible retirement income sources, other than Social Security, discussed in class. (b) For each, describe its benefits and one or more problems with it. (c) Name and briefly describe three reasonably safe ways an older person can invest their retirement funds so that their funds are relatively safe and provide some during retirement.
11. (a) What is the equity issue as described by Hillier and Barrow? (b) Provide an argument for each side of the issue. Your discussion should include at least several reasons why someone would support one side and several for supporting the other. (c) What seems most reasonable to you and why?

PowerPoint Information (drawn from Chapter 12)

12. (a) What is elder abuse? (b) Describe the most common type. (c) Describe three other types of elder abuse. (d) What are the characteristics of older persons most likely to be abused? (e) Who are most likely to be the abuser and what are their characteristics? (f) Describe four reasons mentioned in class/powerpoint slides regarding why an older person might not report an abuser. (g) Describe several solutions discussed.
13. (a) What is institutional abuse? (b) Where does it occur, (c) Who are the abusers, (d) What are some causes of institutional abuse? (e) What kinds of abuse occur (provide examples). (f) Under what circumstances is the inappropriate use or dose of a prescription drug considered abuse? (g) Who should be contacted if an institutionalized person is getting abused? (h) How can they help?