

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HS2009 Sociology of the Life Course

Pre-requisites : HS1001 Person and Society

No. of AUs. : 3

Contact Hours : 39 Hours

Course Aims

This course is an introduction to the life course approach, and how it is applied to social science. With the help of several concepts and principles, the life course perspective helps us understand how societies and individuals change over time. It gives us a framework to examine various factors (e.g., historical, social) that affect us as we grow older; both in the continuities of life, and in the twists/turns that may happen to us along the way. It shows us that our lives are interconnected, but also that disparities between social groups can grow over time. In addition, we will briefly explore some methodological tools that can help us evaluate these processes.

The class schedule is divided into three broad parts. In the first part of the course, we will learn about the key principles of the life course perspective and how they can be applied empirically. In the second part, we will explore different drivers of societal change over time, and learn to discriminate between them. Finally, in the third part, we will explore select topics that are crucial to life course analysis, such as the integration of biomarkers in life course research.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe life course concepts and principles to any interested party
2. Construct a coherent argument/critique on sociological/demographic topics (e.g., work, family, education) based on life course principles
3. Outline one or more ways to investigate life course processes empirically

Course Content

Week 1 - Introduction to the Life Course Perspective

Key concepts: Trajectories, Transitions

Week 2 - Life Course Principles I

Key concepts: Life course perspective, Life span development, human agency

Week 3 - Life Course Principles II

Key concepts: Timing in lives, time and place, linked lives

Week 4 – The Life History Interview

Key concepts: Life history interview

Week 5 - Distinguishing Age, Period, and Cohort Processes

Key concepts: Age, Period, Cohort

Week 6 - Cumulative (Dis)advantage and Age-as-Leveler

Key concepts: Cumulative (dis)advantage

Week 7 - Generational Differences

Key concepts: Generations, cohort change

Week 8 - Methods for Life Course Analysis I

Key concepts: Cohort sequential designs, age-period-cohort models

Week 9 - Methods for Life Course Analysis II

Key concepts: Life grid for qualitative analysis, social sequence analysis

Week 10 - Turning Points

Key concepts: Turning points

Week 11 - Structural Lag

Key concepts: Structural lag

Week 12 - Biosocial Pathways

Key concepts: Allostatic load, gene-environment interactions, biomarkers

Week 13 - Summing Up (review / revision)

Course Assessment

CA1 Class participation : 10%

CA2 Life History Interview : 30%

CA3 Group Research Memo : 30%

CA4 Take-Home Test : 30%

Total -----
100%