

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Stories and old age: Narrative gerontology - 3220

Last update 18-10-2018

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Social Work

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Gabriela Spector-Mersel

Coordinator Email: gabrielasm@013.net

Coordinator Office Hours: by prior appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Gabriela Spector-Mersel

Course/Module description:

In the last couple of decades, Narrative Gerontology has been established as a sub-discipline within gerontology. This field focuses on stories (narratives) as a vehicle for understanding old age "from within" and to raise older people`s quality of life. Narrative gerontology draws from research and theory stressing the importance of reminiscence and life review in later life, and has received new contents with the narrative turn taking place in the social sciences.

Course/Module aims:

In the course students will learn the philosophical and methodological premises that underlie narrative gerontology, as a worldview that guides the understanding of older individuals, and as a basis for research, evaluation and intervention. In addition, they will learn to interview older individuals in a life story approach and to analyze life stories.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1. recognize the philosophy underlying narrative gerontology*
- 2. understand the methodological principles that guide studies in narrative gerontology*
- 3. interview according to the life story method*
- 4. analyze life stories*
- 5. Evaluate older people`s life stories vis-a-vis the identity needs of later life*
- 6. plan guidelines for narrative intervention with older adults*

Attendance requirements(%):

up to three lessons can be missed up without the lecturer's approval

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lectures, discussions, exercises

Course/Module Content:

- 1. Introduction: What is narrative gerontology?*
- 2. The narrative paradigm*
- 3. Narrative identity*
- 4. Narrative and old age*
- 5. Life story interview*
- 6. Life story analysis*

7. Life stories of older people in contexts

Required Reading:

1. Introduction: What is narrative gerontology?

De Medeiros, K. (2016).

Narrative gerontology: Countering the master narratives of aging. Narrative Works, 6(1), 63-81.

2. The narrative paradigm

Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). *Narrative research: Time for a paradigm. Narrative Inquiry, 20(1), 205-225.*

3. Narrative identity

ספקטור-מרזל, ג. (2012). הסיפור אינו כל הסיפור: תעודת הזהות הנרטיבית. מגמות, מח (2), 227-250.

4. Narrative and old age

ספקטור-מרזל, ג. (2008). צברים לא מזדקנים: סיפורי חיים של קצינים בכירים מדור תש"ח. ירושלים: מאגנס. פרק חמישי: מנועי הבררה הסיפורית.

De Lange, F. (2011). *Inventing yourself: How older adults deal with the pressure of late-modern identity construction. In G. Kenyon, E. Bohlmeijer, & W. L. Randall (Eds.), Storying later life: Issues, investigations, and interventions in narrative gerontology (pp. 51-65). Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

Randall, W. L. (2011). *Memory, metaphor, and meaning: Reading for wisdom in the stories of our lives. In G. Kenyon, E. Bohlmeijer, & W. L. Randall (Eds.), Storying later life: Issues, investigations, and interventions in narrative gerontology (pp. 20-50). Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

5. Life story interview

Rosenthal, G. (2003). *The healing effects of storytelling: On the conditions of curative storytelling in the context of research and counseling. Qualitative Inquiry, 9(6), 915-933.*

6. Life story analysis

Spector-Mersel, G. (2011). *Mechanisms of selection in claiming narrative identities: A model for interpreting narratives. Qualitative Inquiry, 17(2), 172-185.*

Spector-Mersel, G. (2014). "I was... Until... Since then...": Exploring the mechanisms of selection in a tragic narrative. *Narrative Works*, 4(1), 19-48.

7. Life stories of older people in contexts

Randall, W., Baldwin, C., McKenzie-Mohr, S. McKim, E., Furlong, D. (2015). Narrative and resilience: A comparative analysis of how older adults story their lives. *Journal of Aging Studies* 34, 155-161.

Additional Reading Material:

1. Introduction: What is narrative gerontology?

De Medeiros, K. (2014). *Narrative gerontology in research and practice*. New York, NY: Springer (ch. 1, pp. 1-16)

Kenyon, G. M., & Randall, W. L. (2001). Narrative gerontology: An overview. In G. Kenyon, P. Clark, & B. de Vries (Eds.), *Narrative gerontology: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-18). New York: Springer.

Randall, W. L. & Kenyon, G. M. (2004). Time, story, and wisdom: Emerging themes in narrative gerontology. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 23 (4), 333-346.

2. The narrative paradigm

Randall, W. L. (1999). Narrative intelligence and the novelty of our lives. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 13 (1), 11-28.

Freeman, M. (2017). Narrative at the limits (Or: what is "life" really like?). In B. Schiff, A.E. Mckim, & S. Patron (Eds.). *Life and Narrative: The risks and responsibilities of storying experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

3. Narrative identity

McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233-238.

Singer, J. A. (2004). Narrative identity and meaning making across the adult lifespan: An introduction. *Journal of Personality*, 72 (3), 437-460.

4. Narrative and old age

Freeman, M. (2011). Narrative foreclosure in later life: Possibilities and limits. In G. Kenyon, E. Bohlmeijer, & W. L. Randall (Eds.), *Storying later life: Issues, investigations, and interventions in narrative gerontology* (pp. 3-19). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Randall, W. L. (2012). The importance of being ironic: Narrative openness and personal resilience in later life. *Gerontologist*, 53(1), 9-16.

6. Life story analysis

ספקטור-מרזל, ג. (2008). צברים לא מזדקנים: סיפורי חיים של קצינים בכירים מדור תש"ח. ירושלים: מאגנס. פרק ראשון: המבוא – אני צבר.

7. Life stories of older people in contexts

אילון, ב. (2011). זיכרונות מתש"ח: סיפורים אישיים במרחב המקוון. סוציולוגיה ישראלית, יב(2), 355-379.

הראל, ד. (2017). הבניית הזהות הנרטיבית בסיפורי חיים של זקנים עם דמנציה. חיבור לשם קבלת התואר דוקטור לפילוסופיה, המחלקה לספרות משווה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן.

וינטרשטיין, ט. (2008). כמו יונה פצועה: סיפורי חיים של נשים מוכות זקנות. ירושלים: אשל.

טוקאיר, ל. וקורט ד. (2007). יצירת משמעות בזיכרונות ילדות של ניצולי גטו טרזיינשטט: מחקר נרטיבי. מגמות, מה (2), 272--300.

Burnell, K., Coleman, P. & Hunt, N. (2011). Achieving narrative coherence following traumatic war experience: The role of social support. In G. Kenyon, E. Bohlmeijer, & W. L. Randall (Eds.), *Storying later life: Issues, investigations, and interventions in narrative gerontology* (pp. 195-212). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 20 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 80 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

The course`s assignment (in pairs) consists of interviewing an older person and analyzing his or her life story