OBJECTIVES

- Break your own stereotypes of "the elderly"
- Become familiar with the physical and sensory challenges of late life
- Become acquainted with some elders in our community
- Gain insight & sensitivity regarding appropriate design solutions for older adults
- Learn about the various housing options for late life
- Apply gerontology and environment-aging theory to real people & settings
- Envision new models of physical environments for elders of the future

OVERVIEW

Rooted in the fields of environmental psychology, human factors/ergonomics, and gerontology, this course provides an opportunity to learn about both older adults and their housing needs & options. Through discussion, lecture, readings, site visits, guest panels and speakers, and personal contact with elders, you will learn about the social, cognitive, and physiological needs of older adults, as well as the design implications of those needs. You will gain knowledge about the range of housing types available to older adults and begin to envision the future of elder housing. Service learning is a particularly important component of the course.

REQUIREMENTS -- The course requirements are outlined below:

#1 Elder-Friendly Design Evaluation

CHOOSE: A) Restaurant Evaluation OR B) Grocery Store Evaluation
due Monday Oct 3rd @ 5pm (presentations Tues Oct 4) 25%-20%
Evaluate either TWO restaurants OR TWO grocery stores in terms of design for older adults. Both options will allow you to interact with elders and apply your knowledge of sensory and physiological changes and human factors/ergonomics to an environment for elders. You may need to read ahead. (see handout).

#2 Project #2 TBA Due November 20%

#3 Discussion Leadership & Class Participation throughout semester 10%
In addition to reading and preparing for class, students will periodically summarize articles, lead the discussion, and present information to the class. Because this is a small class that meets only once per week, your participation and involvement is critical.

#4 Three Site Visit Reports (~3 pages each) due dates noted in syllabus @ 5pm 15%
Please write site visit reports for three of the facilities that we visit. You may choose the three. Each report should be about 3 pages long. Include: 1.) Your reactions and impressions of the place 2.) A critique of the physical environment including pros and cons and apply three themes or concepts from readings / lecture, etc.

#5 Final Paper due Friday Dec 4 @ 5pm 25%-20%
Your final paper (10 pages) is an opportunity to explore a topic that interested you during the semester. Start early to think about a topic that might interest you (1-page w/ references--preliminary topic idea(s) due Fri Oct 14). You should include at least 8 research articles (i.e., articles from research journals, not websites).

#6 Service Learning - throughout semester journal & paper due Friday Dec 11th 15%
A minimum 20 hours of community service with elders is required. You may choose to join weekly trips to Lakeside Nursing Home though Cornell’s Public Service Center, participate in local gardening with elders, be matched to visit a local elder through the Office for the Aging, volunteer at Hospicare, or avail yourself of another opportunity. Be sure to keep a journal of your activities as well as your reflections or insights throughout the semester. I will ask you to periodically hand-in your journal. Finally, summarize your experiences in a brief paper (3-5 pages). Hand-in both your log and the paper.
Service Learning
Below are some possible avenues to help you plan your community service involvement. The community service panel will take place in class on September 6.

Through the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, you can be matched with an elder in the community to visit weekly, provide respite for a caregiver, help with light housekeeping, or assist with errands. Typically, a visitor commits to 1-2 hours per week. Contact Trina Schickel for more information. You will need to meet with her and provide one reference.

Bridges of Cornell Heights, Theresa Nix, 257-5777, TNix@bridgescornellheights.com
http://www.bridgesofmendon.com/basics.html
Bridges is an innovative, upscale, relatively small scale facility in a residential setting. Located at 403 Wyckoff Road, Bridges is very walkable from the Cornell Campus. In Fall 2005, they will be completing a second home next to the original “Bridges” house. Contact Theresa Nix to identify ways that you might contribute to the quality of life of Bridges’ residents by visiting during meals, reading to residents, joining group outings, etc.

Cornell Elderly Partnership (CEP), Public Service Center (PSC)  pscelderly@cornell.edu
The CEP typically coordinates weekly trips to visit elders in local nursing homes. In the past, the CEP has most often visited residents of Lakeside Nursing Home where they visit, read, garden, or create crafts and projects.

Lakeside Nursing Home, Suzanne Bakert, 273-8072
In addition to visiting Lakeside Nursing Home residents with the Cornell Elderly Partnership, you may choose to independently make arrangements to visit residents. Possible activities include joining weekly baking events, meeting one-on-one with individuals, and watering or weeding the garden while visiting with residents. Contact Suzanne Bakert to identify roles you might fill. Lakeside is at 1229 Trumansburg Road (follow signs to the hospital) on the West side of the Lake. The TCAT bus #21 goes to Lakeside.

The Reconstruction Home, Beth Pittman, 273-4166
The Reconstruction Home is another local nursing home that welcomes volunteers. Located at 318 S. Albany Street, The Reconstruction Home is an easy walk from the Ithaca Commons.

READINGS:

On Electronic Reserve:
Coursepack

[R] On Reserve in Mann Library & in DEA Resource Room:
Week 1

(T) August 29: Introduction “Environments” and “Elderly”

Introduction to Environmental Gerontology Theory

Week 2

(T) September 6:

Images, Stereotypes, Stigmas, Demographics of Old Age, and the role of the Medical Model

These readings may sensitize us to some of the images and stereotypes we have of “the elderly” or of “old age”. In The Fountain of Age, Betty Friedan describes how our culture and media perpetuate the idea that later life is a “problem” or “plight” to be denied or hidden. Wells discusses how framing old age as a medical problem adds to the stigma and furthermore, restricts the nature and scope of resources we might employ in later life. The Pastalan excerpt further highlights the view of old age as a medical problem, or disease. Harootyan dispenses with some myths of old age and considers design implications. How might design either reinforce or break stereotypes and stigmas of old age? The final reading provides an overview of U.S. demographics regarding the elderly.


Community Service Panel and Orientation 3:00

Guest panelists will introduce you to a few of the many local community service opportunities

Trina Schickel, Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Thalia Segal, Cornell Elderly Partnership (CEP), Public Service Center

Beth Pittman, The Reconstruction Home

Theresa Nix, Bridges at Cornell Heights

Week 3

(T) September 13:

Sensory Changes in Late Life & Design Implications

These readings provide some background regarding changes in sensory function that commonly occur with age. In designing for older adults, it is important to consider factors such as vision and hearing. How might these issues be relevant in architectural and design?

On-line assignment TBA


Optional Readings:


2:00 GUEST SPEAKER: Finger Lakes Independence Center

Demonstration of Low-Tech Assistive Devices

**Week 4**

**(T) September 20: Physiological Issues: Anthropometrics**

In-Class Ergonomic Assessment

These readings describe anthropometric changes that commonly occur with age. How will your height, reach, strength, and mobility change over your life course? How will this affect your ability to function and your expectations of the environment around you?


Optional Readings:


**Access, Usability & Universal Design**

These readings introduce you to the concept of “Universal Design” – design which functions easily for everyone. Universal design is elegant, safe, and free of stigmas of disability and old age.


Optional Readings:


Week 5

(T) September 27: Site Visits TBA

Progress report: Turn-in Community Service journals

Week 6

(M) October 3rd 5:00 pm: Restaurant or Grocery Evaluations DUE

(T) October 4th: In-Class Presentations

The Role of Familiarity & Personalization

These readings explore the relevance of familiarity and personalization. The Kaplan & Kaplan excerpt describes a tension between preferring the familiar and desiring variety. Note the preferences matrices presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. While these concepts might most readily be applied to cognitive mapping and wayfinding, might they also be relevant to environments for elderly more generally? Hunt provides some insight as to how familiarity might ease relocation. How would you characterize the relationship between familiarity and personalization? Do you think the relationship between familiarity and preference changes over the life course? Küller’s research suggests that settings that are more familiar – and more personalized might benefit older adults. Gifford presents an overview of territoriality as well as some implications for environmental design. Consider how are territory and personalization related? How might opportunities for personalization might be provided in a residential setting?


Optional Readings:


(F) October 7th 5:00 pm: DUE Site Visit Report #1

Week 7

(T) October 11th: FALL BREAK – No Class
**Week 8**

**(T) October 18th**

**Transitions & Relocation in Late Life: Implications & Predictors of Success**

Older adults typically experience a number of transitions in late life, often including environmental transitions. What is involved in relocation? This depends on a variety of factors. For older adults, moves are sometimes involuntary, so the experience may be particularly challenging. Frank raises the issue of liminality. Can design help people to complete the rite of passage involved in relocation?


**Optional Readings:**


**Green Spaces & Restoration**

The Stoneham & Thoday chapters introduce you to relevant issues of landscape design for older adults. Consider how issues they raise, such as access, security, views, privacy, and maintenance, might be relevant to various housing options. The Kaplans’ theory of the restorative effects of nature provides a theoretical foundation for the argument that nature ought to be incorporated in the design of many varied settings that people inhabit. How else might the nearby nature affect the well-being of older adults?


**Week 9**

**(T) October 24th**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** KIRK HINES, Horticulture Therapist

Wesley Woods Geriatrics Center, Emory Healthcare Center, Atlanta GA.

& Site visits ~2:30 – 4:30: Alterra Clarebridge Cottage; Lakeside Nursing Home Garden
Week 10

Progress report: Turn-in Community Service journals

(T) November 1: Housing Options – An Overview

From these and/or other readings, please prepare to present ONE Housing Option / Housing Type to the class. For each, describe its characteristics, prevalence, clientele/ target audience, design characteristics, cost, history, pro’s and con’s, etc.

This set of readings provides an overview of housing options for older adults. The types of facilities described include Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC), Assisted Living Facilities, ECHO Housing, LORC’s and NORC’s. CCRC’s provide a unique model of living for older adults, with a continuum of care and independence options in one setting. What are the unique design challenges of this setting? To what extent do you agree with the pros and cons presented by Golant (1992)?


Design for People with Alzheimer’s Disease

How is designing for Alzheimer’s residents different than designing for other people? How is it similar? What is an appropriate level of stimulation? These readings discuss the unique issues of designing for individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease.


Optional Readings:


Week 11

(T) November 8th: The Meaning of “Home,”- Homeyness & Institutionality

One critical aspect of avoiding the perpetuation of stigmas of old age through design is to create environments that are homey, rather than institutional. This set of readings provides some guidance toward that goal. Marsden builds on a conceptual framework of “homeyness” developed by McCracken (not assigned). Do you agree with his conclusions? How might a feeling of homeyness be communicated both on the interior and on the exterior? With a focus on dementia special care units, Pastalan discusses the institutional paradigm and the importance of home-like characteristics.


Optional Readings:


Site visit: Kendal of Ithaca 3:00

Week 12

(T) November 15th: Aging and Environment: Theory & Assessment

From these and/or other readings, please prepare to present TWO Aging & Environment Theories to the class. For each theory, describe the theory including key concepts, when it was developed and by whom and discuss how you think the theory is helpful or useful, or not, and provide two examples of how it might be used to describe a specific interaction between an actual older adult and the environment. These readings will introduce you to Aging and Environment Theory as well as some of the key contributors, including Kurt Lewin, M. Powell Lawton, and Rudolph Moos. Some of the key theoretical ideas include Lewin’s B=f(P, E), Lawton’s Competence-Press Model, and the Environmental Docility Hypothesis. In addition, Hill & Gregg present gerontological theory.


Optional Reading:

Choice & Autonomy

Issues of maintaining choice and autonomy are very important in later life, in the home environment as well as in other settings. Rowe provides a brief review of research concerning control or autonomy among older adults. Note his suggestion that too much assistance can be “infantilizing” and lead to a sense of learned helplessness. Feingold and Werby present a case study of one housing organization’s efforts to enhance the competence of older residents by increasing their choice and control over the environment. The cartoon from Research News illustrates these issues. Recall that with their “Environmental Press” model, Lawton and Nahemow provide a theoretical framework in which to consider issues of autonomy and competence. What might be some design implications of these ideas? Sherrod and Cohen discussed the importance of perceived control in potentially stressful settings such as those of high density or low predictability. What suggestions do they make in terms of design?


(F) November 18th 5:00 pm: DUE Site Visit Report #2

Week 13

(T) November 22: Gender & Culture

Through these readings we will consider late life housing as primarily a women’s issue – within the U.S. and abroad. We will also discuss cultural issue of elder housing. How are gender and culture relevant to the design of environments for elders?


Site Visit: Bridges of Cornell Heights 3:00

(F) November 25th 5:00 pm: DUE Site Visit Report #3
**Week 14**

*(T)* November 29: student presentations

*Final project due date TBA*

Final Paper due Friday Dec 4 @ 5pm

Service Learning journal & paper due Friday Dec 11th