

Course title: Ageing societies: Social, economic and political consequences

Language of instruction: English

Professor: Luis Recuenco

Professor's contact and office hours: luis.recuenco@upf.edu

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credit: 6 ECTS credits

Course prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course

Language requirements: Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent : Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish).

Course focus and approach:

Population aging is about to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with consequences for almost all sectors of society, politics and the economy.

This course will analyze the aging of the population from an international perspective, comparing the countries of northern, central and southern Europe, as well as the United States.

Course description:

This multidisciplinary and eminently practical subject is aimed at getting to know the changes that population ageing is going to have on politics, the economy and society. Throughout the course, these types of questions shall be answered: How is population ageing affecting the labour market? Is there a generational conflict between young and elderly people? Can we continue working until over 70? What kind of home care models for dependent elderly people work best in Western countries?

Although population ageing affects all western countries, they are adapting to this process very differently. This divergent reality is a transversal aspect of the subject, in which the countries of southern, central and northern Europe are compared as well as those of the USA.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this course the students will be able to

- explain the reasons why Western societies are ageing.
- know the social, economic and political consequences of ageing population.
- know the different ways Western societies are adapting in the face of the ageing population process.
- develop practical skills for solving problems related to ageing population.
- know the main debates related to population ageing.

- know how to debate academically and democratically with regard to the main issues related to ageing population.

Course workload:

The theoretical sessions are complemented by eminently practical seminars. Students will have to read different texts before coming to the seminars.

Teaching methodology:

The four seminars address different topics and have different formats. The first seminar is based on a role playing. The second and third are based on a literary discussion about different texts. The fourth seminar is a practical case of decision-making and implementation of a specific policy for older people.

Assessment criteria:

Final exam: 35%

Mid-Term Exam (MCT): 15%

Class participation: 10%

Seminars: 40%

BaPIS absence policy:

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy does not make a distinction between justified and unjustified absences. All absences—whether due to common short-term illnesses or personal reasons—are counted toward the total amount and cannot be excused. Therefore, students are responsible for managing all their absences.

Only in cases of longer absences—such as hospitalization, prolonged illness, traumatic events, or other exceptional situations—will absences be considered for exceptions with appropriate documentation. The Academic Director will review these cases on an individual basis.

Students must inform the Instructor and the International Programs Office promptly via email if serious circumstances arise.

Classroom norms:

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one one- hour session.

Weekly schedule:**WEEK 1**

Introduction to the course.

The processes of population aging in Western countries.

The social, political and economic impact of population aging.

The international context of Western countries: southern, central and northern Europe. USA.

ESPING-ANDERSEN, G. 1992. The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism. Cambridge: Princeton University Press.

WEEK 2

Introduction to pension systems, different pension models according to countries and recent reforms of pension systems. Will there be a collapse of pension systems? How to make pension systems more sustainable?

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2024. The 2024 Ageing Report. Institutional Paper 279.

BARR, N. 2006. Reforming Pensions: Myths, Truths, and Policy Choices. IMF Working Paper 00/139.

DIAMOND, P. 2005. Risk Sharing and the Welfare State. Conference in Tribute to Jean-Jaques Laffont, Toulouse Roundtables on Economic Policy, Toulouse, July 1.

WEEK 3

Factors explaining retirement in the OECD, active aging and health inequalities. Is there an age limit to work? What does it depend on?

EBBINGHAUS, B. 2006. Reforming Early Retirement in Europe, Japan and the USA. New York: Oxford University Press.

GRUBER, J. and WISE, D. 2007. Introduction in Social Security Programs and Retirement Around the World edited by Gruber, J. and Wise, D. London: The University of Chicago Press.

SANZENBACHAR, G. T. , WEBB, A. , ORLOVA, N.S. and COSGROVE, C.M. 2016. Does a uniform retirement age make sense? Issue Brief-Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, Number 16-1.

WEEK 4

Demographic factors that influence population aging. Life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, fertility, women's labor participation and immigration.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2024. The 2024 Ageing Report. Institutional Paper 279.

EUROSTAT. 2024. Population Structure and Ageing.

GINN, J , STREET, D. and ARBER, S. 2001. Women, Work and Pensions. Ballmoor: Open University Press.

Role playing seminar: Delay the retirement age to 70? A parliamentary commission is simulated and each group will have to represent an actor. The actors are employers, unions, political formations and a pressure group

WEEK 5

Ageism as discrimination against older people. Is it widespread in society? What consequences does it have? What policies have been implemented or can be developed to reduce this discrimination?

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2021. Global report on ageism

LEVY, B. 2023. Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live. NY: William Morrow & Co

WEEK 6

The Silver Economy. What relevance does it have? Changes in labor markets due to the aging of the population. Consumption and immigration

VARNAI, P. , SIMMONDS, P. , FARLA, K. and WORRTHINGTON, H. 2018. The Silver Economy, European Union, 2015/0038.

Gathering seminar on the topic of ageism. In the classroom, different presentations of the different sections of a book will be made in a literary gathering format and later there will be a sharing and debate of this form of discrimination.

WEEK 7

The orientation of the vote of older people and their support for different political formations. What are the issues that concern older people the most? Do their needs

influence the orientation of the vote? Do young people vote differently than older people?

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. 2024. Changing Partisan Coalitions in a Politically Divided Nation.

4. Age, generational cohorts and party identification, April 9, 2024.

GOERRES, A. 2007. Why are Older People More Likely to Vote? The Impact of Ageing on Electoral Turnout in Europe, *Journal of Politics and International Relations* BJPIR: 2007 VOL 9, 90–121

WEEK 8

Mid-Term Exam

Visit to a foundation dedicated to Alzheimer's research

Gathering seminar on the conflict between generations, that is, between older and younger people. In the classroom, different presentations of their opposing visions will be made: authors who consider that a generational conflict exists and others consider that it does not. There will be a sharing and subsequent debate.

PALIER, B. 2014. The emerging intergenerational conflict. Policy Network, 2014, pp.1-4.

HESS, M. , NAUMAN, E. and STEINKOPF, L. 2016. Population Ageing, the Intergenerational Conflict, and Active Ageing Policies – a Multilevel Study of 27 European Countries, *Journal of Population Ageing*, 10, 11-23.

WEEK 9

Long-term care in southern, central and northern Europe as well as the US. Are there differences between countries? Which are the most notable? What consequences do these differences have?

SZEBEHELY, M. and TRYDEGARD, Gun-Britt. 2012. Home care for older people in Sweden: a universal model in transition, *Health and Social Care*, 20(3).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2021. Lon-term care report. Trends, challenges and opportunities in an ageing society. Vol 1

WEEK 10

The debate on generational conflict. Theoretical session in which previously discussed issues will be delved into and introducing new concepts.

ESPING-ANDERSEN, E. and SARASA, S. 2002. The generational conflict reconsidered. Journal of European Social Policy, Vol. 12, 1.

Seminar on decision-making and implementation of an advanced social policy model oriented towards older people.

WEEK 11

Final exam

Course review

Last revision: March 2025

Required readings:

On line Course reading pack prepared by the professor

Recommended bibliography:

D'ADDIO, A. , KEESE, M. and WHITEHOUSE, E. 2010. Population ageing and labour markets, Oxford Review of Economic Policy, Volume 26, Issue 4, Winter.

ESPING-ANDERSEN, E. and SARASA, S. 2002. The generational conflict reconsidered. Journal of European Social Policy, Vol. 12, 1.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2024. The 2024 Ageing Report. Institutional Paper 279.

HESS, M. , NAUMAN, E. and STEINKOPF, L. 2016. Population Ageing, the Intergenerational Conflict, and Active Ageing Policies – a Multilevel Study of 27 European Countries, Journal of Population Ageing, 10, 11-23.

JOHN, D.C. 2010. Time to Raise Social Security's Retirement Age, Background, Heritage Foundation, No. 2492, November 22.

PALIER, B. 2014. The emerging intergenerational conflict. Policy Network, 2014, pp.1-4.

SANZENBACHAR, G. T. , WEBB, A. , ORLOVA, N.S. and COSGROVE, C.M. 2016. Does a uniform retirement age make sense? Issue Brief-Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, Number 16-1.

SZEBEHELY, M. and TRYDEGARD, Gun-Britt. 2012. Home care for older people in Sweden: a universal model in transition, Health and Social Care, 20(3).

TESCH-ROEMER, C. 2012. Active Ageing and Quality of Life in Old Age. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, ECE/WG.1/16.



VARNAI, P. , SIMMONDS, P. , FARLA, K. and WORRTHINGTON, H. 2018. The Silver Economy, European Union, 2015/0038.