

## CHAPTER 2: THEORIES AND METHODS

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### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. In 1980, the Gerontological Society surveyed 111 scholars to establish a core program for the field of gerontology. Though the experts disagreed as to the content and boundaries of the field, which of the following items did the scholars collectively believe?
  - a. Three areas of study should form the core of the curriculum.
  - b. The socioeconomic-environmental aspects of aging should be the main focus of courses at the introductory level.
  - c. A consensus on the definition must be reached before gerontology can grow as a discipline.
  - d. A comprehensive program would be difficult to construct because of problems in deciding what aspects of aging are the most important.

ANS: A                      REF: 22                      BLM: REM

2. Which area of study in gerontology examines the physiological and health changes that occur as people age?
  - a. physio-environmental studies
  - b. cohort medical studies
  - c. psycho-physiological studies
  - d. biomedical studies

ANS: D                      REF: 22                      BLM: REM

3. Which of the following would be an example of a psychosocial study in gerontology?
  - a. formal social supports
  - b. causes of dementia
  - c. relationships between individuals and groups
  - d. effects of healthcare systems

ANS: C                      REF: 22                      BLM: HO

4. George is conducting research about the effects of aging on the educational structure as well as the effects of social structures on older people. Which area of gerontology is he studying?
  - a. psychosocial studies
  - b. socio-individual studies
  - c. multi-stage development social studies
  - d. socioeconomic-environmental studies

ANS: D                      REF: 22                      BLM: HO

5. Which areas of research are combined in the field of social gerontology?
  - a. socioeconomic-environmental, psychosocial, and practice-related research
  - b. biomedical and socioeconomic-environmental research
  - c. psychosocial, social policy, and social sciences research
  - d. biological, psychological, and health sciences research

ANS: A                      REF: 22                      BLM: REM

6. Which field looks at aging from the points of view of both the individual and the social system?
  - a. geriatrics
  - b. psychosocial studies

- c. social gerontology
- d. didactic-senescence

ANS: C                      REF: 22                      BLM: REM

7. Why do social gerontologists examine the biological and physical changes that occur in old age?
- a. to adapt the research obtained to their field of study
  - b. to study the relationship between biological aging and personal relationships
  - c. to see how the changes affect the individual or society as a whole
  - d. to establish a unified basis for the studies of biomedical, psycho-social, and socioeconomic-environmental studies

ANS: C                      REF: 23                      BLM: HO

8. What do social gerontologists use to guide their research and interpret the results of studies?
- a. statistics and demographics
  - b. test sampling
  - c. theories
  - d. focus groups

ANS: C                      REF: 23                      BLM: REM

9. How is a theory deemed to be a valuable tool for a researcher?
- a. It gives concrete and final answers to questions.
  - b. It provides practical information for the development of social programs and interventions.
  - c. It provides essential trivial information about aging.
  - d. It explains all the facts about aging.

ANS: B                      REF: 23                      BLM: HO

10. According to the text, how does a researcher select a theory to use in order to explain a set of research findings?
- a. according to the researcher's sense of how the world works
  - b. according to the original hypotheses of the study
  - c. according to recent academic trends
  - d. according to journal preferences and peer reviews

ANS: A                      REF: 23                      BLM: REM

11. Kayla is examining a theory that focuses on individuals and their interactions with one another, such as a brief confrontation at a parents' school meeting. Which of the following is Kayla studying?
- a. micro-level
  - b. interpersonal
  - c. psychological
  - d. organic

ANS: A                      REF: 23                      BLM: HO

12. Which theories focus on social structure, social processes and problems, and their interrelationship?
- a. macro-level theories
  - b. socio-political interactive theories
  - c. global perspectives
  - d. micro-level theories

ANS: A                      REF: 23-24                      BLM: REM

13. Which of the following would be an example of a phenomenon explained by micro-level theories?
- the effect of positive attitudes on older people
  - the effect of industrialization on older peoples' social status
  - changes in memory with age
  - how gender and income affect older people's well-being

ANS: C                      REF: 23-24                      BLM: HO

14. Which of the following is a criticism of micro-level theories?
- They oversimplify social life.
  - They minimize the individual's ability to act.
  - They emphasize what people do rather than the economic and social conditions that cause them to act as they do.
  - They support a definition of old age as a time of decline.

ANS: C                      REF: 24                      BLM: HO

15. Which of the following is a criticism of the theories that examine aging in terms of the social structures that influence behaviour?
- that they are not well-supported by research
  - that they underestimate people's ability to overcome the limits of social structures
  - that they focus too much on outcomes, and not enough on processes
  - that they focus too much on perceptions, and not enough on actions

ANS: B                      REF: 24                      BLM: HO

16. Which of the following methods assists social gerontologists to disentangle the effects of history, biology, and the social life on the aging person?
- theory
  - concept
  - evaluation
  - model

ANS: A                      REF: 23-24                      BLM: REM

17. Which aspect of social life does the interpretive perspective mainly focus on?
- micro-level
  - reorganization
  - problems
  - functions

ANS: A                      REF: 24                      BLM: HO

18. Which perspective looks at how people define situations, create social order, and relate to one another?
- normative perspective
  - interpretive perspective
  - social perspective
  - ethnomethodology

ANS: B                      REF: 24                      BLM: REM

19. Which perspective has historically been used the least by social gerontologists and is now making a resurgence over the last few decades?
- normative perspective
  - psycho-social perspective
  - associative perspective

d. interpretive perspective

ANS: D                    REF: 24                    BLM: REM

20. Which type of theory exemplifies the interpretive perspective?
- a. social pathophysiology
  - b. ethnocentrism
  - c. symbolic interactionist
  - d. disengagement

ANS: C                    REF: 24                    BLM: HO

21. Weber developed the social phenomenological theory. What does Weber say the researcher needs to do in order to understand a social phenomenon?
- a. develop an unbiased description of the phenomena
  - b. understand the meaning that people in the situation attach to the events and their actions
  - c. develop a theory to clearly specify the relationships between people and events
  - d. examine the social structures that enable the phenomenon to occur

ANS: B                    REF: 25                    BLM: REM

22. The Elks Lodge is a Canadian club that has its foundations in social order and organization. The club's first Canadian female Exalted Ruler, Debby Ray, follows which of the following concepts in which the individual is the originator of social order and organization?
- a. the interpretive perspective
  - b. conflict theory
  - c. subculture methodology
  - d. face-to-face interactions

ANS: A                    REF: 25                    BLM: HO

23. Which of the following is a problem with the interpretive perspective?
- a. It suggests that social life does not have quantifiable measures.
  - b. It talks of social order and organization, without considering their source.
  - c. It places subjective interpretations on objective phenomena.
  - d. It does not focus enough on macro-level social phenomena.

ANS: D                    REF: 25-26                    BLM: HO

24. Which of the following terms describes the theories within the interpretive perspective?
- a. interpretation constructionism
  - b. situational constructionism
  - c. social constructionism
  - d. interactional constructionism

ANS: C                    REF: 24                    BLM: REM

25. What are the basic units at work in the social system as described by functionalist theories?
- a. social institutions
  - b. families
  - c. individuals
  - d. ethnic groups and cohorts

ANS: A                    REF: 26                    BLM: HO

26. According to structural functionalism, social institutions adjust to one another as the system responds to internal and external pressures to maintain which of the following?
- social evolution
  - dynamic equilibrium
  - static balance
  - homeostasis

ANS: B                      REF: 26                      BLM: REM

27. Structural functionalism sometimes draws an analogy between which of the following?
- group interactions and the postal system
  - an individual and a social institution
  - society and a living organism
  - macro- and micro-level action

ANS: C                      REF: 26                      BLM: HO

28. Which of the following is an assumption made by structural functionalism?
- Society changes and evolves in a negative direction more often than a positive direction.
  - Functionalism draws connections only between micro-social structures and individuals' actions.
  - People conform to norms because of a belief in a society's underlying value system.
  - Social problems are natural responses, and should be allowed to resolve themselves.

ANS: C                      REF: 26                      BLM: HO

29. How are social problems described in structural functionalism?
- as internal pressures for change
  - as dysfunctions that should be corrected by planning
  - as conflicts between social institutions
  - as the initial reaction to social change and evolution

ANS: B                      REF: 26                      BLM: HO

30. Which perspective is used most often by gerontologists?
- interactive perspective
  - age-stratification perspective
  - functionalist perspective
  - conflict perspective

ANS: C                      REF: 26                      BLM: REM

31. What is the focus of age stratification theory?
- the pressure that leads to the formation of social status and classes
  - the transmission of social life from one generation to the next
  - the movement of age cohorts during the life cycle
  - how micro- and macro-level structures influence the individual's experience of old age

ANS: C                      REF: 26-27                      BLM: REM

32. Michael J. Fox was born in the 1960s during the height of events such as the Canadian Centennial in 196 and the introduction of colour TV in Canada. Fox is a member of an age cohort. Which of the following sentences describes an age cohort?
- a group of people born at the same time
  - a unit of study in gerontology
  - a social institution

d. a social norm that is unique to a specific age group

ANS: A                      REF: 26                      BLM: HO

33. What is the term for a period of life defined by society, such as adolescence or childhood?
- cohort
  - life stage
  - social age
  - age grade

ANS: D                      REF: 27                      BLM: REM

34. Why is the concept of “age cohorts” important in understanding aging?
- because people born in the same period experience the same historical events at the same time in their life cycle
  - because it standardizes the effects of biology and history on the behaviours observed in the elderly
  - because longitudinal studies cannot control for the effects of cultural changes on behaviours, and therefore nested designs need to be employed
  - because qualitative, rather than quantitative, study designs are more effective in describing inter-cohort differences

ANS: A                      REF: 27                      BLM: HO

35. Which of the following does age stratification offer as an explanation of why society changes as people age?
- Each generation of younger people reinvents social norms for itself and cannot rely on older cohorts for guidance.
  - The norms and roles learned by each new cohort change with society.
  - Social problems appear in predictable waves as each new age strata replaces the preceding cohort.
  - Social structures are not permanent, as predicted by structural functionalism, but are fluid and respond to changes.

ANS: B                      REF: 27                      BLM: HO

36. The text compares movement of age cohorts through the life cycle to movement on which of the following?
- an airplane
  - an escalator
  - a ship
  - an elevator

ANS: B                      REF: 27                      BLM: REM

37. Which theory relies on structural functionalist assumptions?
- life course theory
  - cumulative advantage/disadvantage theory
  - activity theory
  - age stratification theory

ANS: D                      REF: 27                      BLM: REM

38. What is the dialectic between individuals and societal structures as described by age stratification theory?
- Changes in values lead to changes in social organizations that influence the process of

aging.

- b. As people age, they take on the norms and roles of their age grade.
- c. New institutions are the result of the institutions that preceded them.
- d. Society is a homogeneous set of structures and functions that most people experience in the same way.

ANS: A                      REF: 27                      BLM: HO

39. Which of the following is an example of the dialectic between individuals and societal structures described by age stratification theory?
- a. gradual change in radio station formats through market forces
  - b. growing acceptance of extramarital sex among the older population, and how the young define their values
  - c. effect of seniors' needs on senior centre programs, and of programs on attitudes toward old age
  - d. interaction of family, caregivers, and researchers to create the concept of Alzheimer's disease

ANS: C                      REF: 27                      BLM: HO

40. Which theory provides new ways to explore differences related to time, period, and cohort?
- a. structural investment theory
  - b. disengagement theory
  - c. age stratification theory
  - d. continuity theory

ANS: C                      REF: 27                      BLM: REM

41. Which of the following describes one of the problems with age stratification theory?
- a. It overlooks inequality within age cohorts.
  - b. It does not examine the effects of a changing society on the values of its members.
  - c. It overemphasizes norms and values, and ignores the effects of folkways and mores.
  - d. It becomes inaccurate at the micro-level.

ANS: A                      REF: 27                      BLM: HO

42. A limitation of the age stratification theory is that which of the following may have a greater influence on people's lives than the norms and values related to their age grade?
- a. political changes
  - b. socio-historical events
  - c. inequality within age cohorts
  - d. personal interpretations of the world

ANS: C                      REF: 27-28                      BLM: HO

43. What does the life course perspective accomplish by incorporating social interaction and social structure within a functionalist perspective?
- a. It completely explains the observed differences in equality between age groups.
  - b. It bridges the micro- and macro-levels of analysis.
  - c. It avoids addressing issues related to conflicts between social groups.
  - d. It provides a holistic approach to the study of gerontology.

ANS: B                      REF: 28                      BLM: HO

44. What occurs in the life course approach at the micro-level?
- a. It studies later life in relation to early events and conditions.





51. Political economy theory grew out of the work of which of the following theorists?
- Weber
  - Goffman
  - Marx
  - Durkheim

ANS: C                      REF: 30                      BLM: REM

52. What does Marxist theory predict regarding older workers?
- They use their experience and knowledge to hold on to resources and power in industry.
  - They are less valuable to industry, and will be fired or retired to make room for faster, cheaper workers.
  - They move up in a company until they reach their level of optimum effectiveness.
  - They are more socially disadvantaged than most workers because of the stigma of old age.

ANS: B                      REF: 30                      BLM: REM

53. According to political economy theory, what can the origins of older people's problems be traced to?
- the political and economic structure of capitalist society
  - ageism
  - the decline in health and intelligence that occurs as people age
  - the influence of middle-aged, middle-class values on social support programs

ANS: A                      REF: 30                      BLM: REM

54. According to the political economy theory, social programs and policies for older people most benefit which of the following groups?
- retirees aged 65–74
  - elderly widows
  - industrialists and the bourgeoisie
  - middle-aged, middle-class professionals

ANS: D                      REF: 30                      BLM: REM

55. Which of the following is a strength of the political economy approach to aging?
- It accurately explains micro-level phenomena.
  - It openly discusses the poverty and other problems older people face, and it offers solutions.
  - It incorporates the experiences of individuals to explain the differences between cohorts.
  - It looks beyond the individual to understand the forces that shape individual aging.

ANS: D                      REF: 30                      BLM: HO

56. Which of the following is a problem with the political economy approach?
- It does not offer viable solutions to social problems.
  - It pays too much attention to an individual's interpretations of social life.
  - It can overemphasize the poverty and problems older people face.
  - It becomes inaccurate at the micro-level.

ANS: C                      REF: 30                      BLM: HO

57. Which of the following describes the feminist perspective of aging?
- It distorts the importance of gender in relation to other factors (such as race and social class).
  - It states that gender defines life experiences, including aging.
  - It reverses the traditional perspective by examining aging in terms of strengths, rather than

weaknesses.

- d. It describes how women have distinct social advantages over men when it comes to aging.

ANS: B

REF: 30-31

BLM: HO

58. Which of the following is a strength of the feminist theory of aging?
- It is congruent with most “mainstream” feminist theories.
  - It illustrates an ability to control for gender, and thereby focus on other social characteristics (such as race and social class).
  - It acknowledges the “feminization of aging.”
  - It recognizes the importance of social structure and individual characteristics.

ANS: D

REF: 31

BLM: HO

59. Period effects cause changes in old age due to which of the following?
- similar background experiences
  - age group differences
  - the time of measurement
  - physiological changes

ANS: C

REF: 33

BLM: HO

60. What is the term for the interpretive theory that is concerned with the social consensus that underlies issues between the generations?
- symbolic-interactionism
  - moral economic theory
  - conflict theory
  - disengagement theory

ANS: B

REF: 32

BLM: REM

61. A researcher is examining the shared moral assumptions held by the members of a society to describe the effect of the society’s values on policy. Which of the following is the researcher using?
- moral economy theory
  - phenomenology
  - symbolic interactionism
  - cross-sectional theory

ANS: A

REF: 32

BLM: HO

62. What does critical gerontology highlight?
- conflict between age groups over economic resources
  - the transition from traditional to modern society
  - movement from one age grade to the next
  - limitations in mainstream gerontological theory

ANS: D

REF: 32

BLM: HO

63. Gerontologists describe three causes for changes in old age. Which of the following is one of these effects?
- economic effects
  - period effects
  - somatic effects
  - social effects

ANS: B

REF: 33

BLM: REM



71. Researchers such as Baltes and Schaie (1982) found that a large part of the intelligence difference between younger and older people was due to which of the following?
- test biases
  - biased subject sampling techniques
  - differences in health status
  - educational differences

ANS: D                      REF: 34                      BLM: REM

72. What is the main problem with a cross-sectional method of analysis in investigating aging?
- It is very expensive.
  - It requires a long period of time to show significant results.
  - It confuses cohort effects with age changes.
  - It cannot distinguish between cohort effects and environmental effects.

ANS: C                      REF: 34                      BLM: HO

73. Which method of analysis looks at a single group of people through two or more points in time?
- cross-sectional analysis
  - longitudinal research designs
  - maturational change analysis
  - time-lag comparison

ANS: B                      REF: 34                      BLM: REM

74. Dr. Phillips is doing memory and reaction-time studies on a group of college graduates, and plans to re-test them when they retire. What is the term for this type of study?
- phenomenological experiment
  - cross-sectional methodology
  - longitudinal design
  - test retest validation

ANS: C                      REF: 34                      BLM: HO

75. What is the main benefit of longitudinal research designs?
- They avoid comparing different cohorts.
  - They avoid environmental effects.
  - They can isolate and study period effects.
  - They give relatively accurate data quickly and at a low cost.

ANS: A                      REF: 34                      BLM: REM

76. Which of the following describes a problem with longitudinal studies?
- Maturational effects confound changes due to aging.
  - Cohort differences cannot be studied.
  - Environmental changes confound age changes.
  - Economic effects confound changes due to aging.

ANS: C                      REF: 34                      BLM: HO

77. Which of the following is a problem with studies that follow a single group of older people over time?
- Differences between age groups cannot be compared.
  - A shift in the sex ratio due to the deaths of more men than women.
  - Differences between individual characteristics (such as ethnicity or social class) cannot be compared.

d. Lack of randomization invalidates many types of statistical analysis.

ANS: B                      REF: 34                      BLM: HO

78. How do time-lag comparisons work?
- by assigning members of different cohorts to groups based on specific characteristics
  - by comparing different groups of people of the same age at different points in time
  - by predicting a cohort's characteristics in the future and then comparing the prediction with the actual outcomes
  - by following a group for a short period of time and collecting as much data as possible

ANS: B                      REF: 35                      BLM: HO

79. What is the overall purpose of studies that look at different groups of people of the same age at different points in time?
- to control for historical or cultural changes
  - to measure differences between cohorts
  - to generate hypotheses
  - to resolve the APC paradox

ANS: B                      REF: 35                      BLM: HO

80. The method of analysis that examines different groups of people of the same age at different points in time is known as a time-lag comparison. What is the main problem with this type of research?
- It confuses environmental effects with cohort effects.
  - It confuses cohort effects with maturational effects.
  - It cannot explain why a particular result has appeared.
  - It confuses maturational effects with environmental effects.

ANS: A                      REF: 36                      BLM: HO

81. Which of the following is a problem common to both longitudinal and time-lag studies?
- They take many years to complete.
  - They confound cohort effects with placebo effects.
  - Results are difficult to interpret without advanced statistical knowledge.
  - Drop-outs can be controlled for through survival analysis statistical techniques.

ANS: A                      REF: 36                      BLM: HO

82. Which of the following is a practical problem related to longitudinal and time-lag studies?
- results that describe experiences of past cohorts, but do not provide insight into the current experiences of the elderly
  - a need for institutional support to continue studies beyond the career of the individual researchers
  - wasted resources resulting from repeating procedures that had been done in previous phases of the study
  - an inability to control for age effects

ANS: B                      REF: 36                      BLM: HO

83. Some methodological problems have been solved by turning simple cross-sectional and simple longitudinal designs into which of the following?
- longi-sectional analyses
  - random representative surveys
  - sequential designs
  - time-cohort comparisons

ANS: C                      REF: 36                      BLM: REM

84. What is the term for a series of cross-sectional studies during a longer longitudinal study?
- multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)
  - sequential design
  - time-lag comparison
  - longi-sectional analysis

ANS: B                      REF: 36                      BLM: REM

85. Which of the following gerontological research designs allows for quick data collection?
- cross-sectional design
  - cohort design
  - sequential design
  - trend analysis design

ANS: C                      REF: 36                      BLM: HO

86. The Aging in Manitoba longitudinal study provides data on which type of needs for older people?
- healthcare
  - educational
  - financial
  - social

ANS: A                      REF: 36                      BLM: REM

87. Which of the following describes the methods used by researchers in aging?
- Methods depend on what best addresses these questions.
  - Methods generally depend on the subjects' physical condition.
  - Methods are based on standard psychological tests and surveys.
  - Methods are limited by statistical methods.

ANS: A                      REF: 37                      BLM: HO

88. According to the text, what is still the dominant approach in most gerontological research?
- focus groups
  - longitudinal studies
  - quantitative methods
  - observation

ANS: C                      REF: 37                      BLM: REM

89. Which of the following describes qualitative methods in research on aging?
- They have decreased as a result of the increased use of computers to provide accurate statistical analyses.
  - They are able to distinguish between environmental effects and cohort effects.
  - They are less time consuming and expensive than other study methods.
  - They use an interpretive theoretical approach to understand data.

ANS: D                      REF: 38                      BLM: HO

90. What is the biggest limitation of quantitative data methods?
- Generalizing samples to a larger population is often not appropriate.
  - The structured questions and responses cannot capture complex experiences or perceptions.

- c. These methods are significantly more expensive.
- d. They are difficult to combine with qualitative methods.

ANS: B                      REF: 39                      BLM: HO

91. Which method allows researchers to capture the complexity of social interactions and behaviours?
- a. quantitative
  - b. longitudinal
  - c. qualitative
  - d. triangulation

ANS: C                      REF: 39                      BLM: REM

92. Which research method allows a researcher to gather data of a more sensitive nature?
- a. triangulation
  - b. qualitative
  - c. longitudinal
  - d. quantitative

ANS: B                      REF: 39                      BLM: HO

93. A gerontologist published data that he received from an elderly Alzheimer's subject. The legal caregiver was unaware that this data was obtained from the subject, and was very upset upon learning about this issue. What type of ethical breach is this?
- a. potential harm
  - b. right to privacy
  - c. true voluntary informed consent
  - d. confidentiality

ANS: C                      REF: 39-40                      BLM: HO

94. Which practice breaks ethical research guidelines?
- a. causing a subject to feel valued in his/her participation
  - b. refusing to identify research subjects
  - c. interviewing subjects with advanced cancer
  - d. causing injury or harm to a participant

ANS: D                      REF: 40                      BLM: HO

95. What must a researcher do if the mental competency of a subject is in question?
- a. work to guarantee that the subject's identity is kept secret
  - b. abandon the study
  - c. avoid interviewing such subjects, as the risks are too great
  - d. ask someone with the legal authority to accede

ANS: D                      REF: 40                      BLM: HO

96. What is the role of ethics review boards in universities and funding agencies?
- a. to make sure a study is worthwhile
  - b. to check the credentials of the researcher
  - c. to evaluate potential harm to participants
  - d. to slow down research

ANS: C                      REF: 40                      BLM: HO

97. Which of the following describes applied research in Canada?

- a. It has been well funded since the 1970s, resulting in long-term improvements to many policies and social systems.
- b. It has received encouragement through government funding agencies.
- c. It has become tainted as a result of poor scientific rigor in several large studies.
- d. It has had limited impact on the field of gerontology.

ANS: B                      REF: 41                      BLM: REM

98. According to the text, which is a benefit to Canadian researchers when it comes to collaborative studies on aging?
- a. no ethical breaches occur in such large studies.
  - b. collaborative studies obtain larger amounts of government funding
  - c. time frames for research are shorter for the collection of data
  - d. these studies pool researchers' skills and resources

ANS: D                      REF: 42                      BLM: REM

99. Which of the following will gerontologists continue to do?
- a. use Marxist models of aging
  - b. link the micro- and macro-levels of theory
  - c. examine the effect of major societal structures on aging
  - d. abandon everything but the micro-level of theory

ANS: B                      REF: 42                      BLM: HO

100. Which type of research prizes the richness of everyday social life over numerical data?
- a. quantitative
  - b. interpersonal
  - c. qualitative
  - d. numerative

ANS: C                      REF: 42                      BLM: REM

101. According to the text, which of the following skills or methods will allow gerontology researchers the ability to increase upon their research opportunities about aging?
- a. increased education
  - b. increased use of tablets and laptops
  - c. increased reading ability
  - d. increased typing skills

ANS: B                      REF: 42                      BLM: REM

102. Which of the following describes video recording technology?
- a. It has created unforeseen privacy issues.
  - b. It allows researchers to observe behaviour without a researcher present.
  - c. It is dangerous to the elderly.
  - d. It is not available to most researchers.

ANS: B                      REF: 42-43                      BLM: HO

103. Which type of research do current studies of aging in Canada show a trend toward?
- a. longitudinal
  - b. cross-sectional
  - c. interdisciplinary
  - d. qualitative



**SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Define the term “critical gerontology.” Explain the concept, and list the four themes or “conceptual tools” that form the basis of critical gerontology.

ANS:

Student answers should include the following:

Critical gerontology are the theoretical approaches that look within theory and research to critically examine and question the underlying and taken-for-granted assumptions about aging. This means that there is more to aging than we know or assume to know. The four themes involved in critical gerontology are:

1. ageing and politics of redistribution
2. gender and ageing
3. ageing, identity, and postmodernism
4. ageing and surveillance

REF: 32

2. What is “age stratification theory?” Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this theory of aging.

ANS:

Student answers should include the following:

Age stratification theory is also called the aging and society paradigm. This theory focuses on the movement of age cohorts over the life course and on “the role of social structures in the process of individual aging and the stratification by age in the society.” According to age stratification theory, people in each cohort move or flow through society’s predetermined age grades as they age. It also maintains that society also changes as people age, so the norms and roles learned by each new cohort changes as society changes.

Advantages:

1. The age stratification theory has helped to separate age differences (between cohorts) from age changes over the life course (aging).
2. It highlights the impact of historical and societal changes on individuals and cohorts.
3. It shows the relationship between aging and social structure.

Disadvantages:

1. People of the same age do not all experience the world in the same way.
2. The age stratification theory overlooks each person’s interpretation of the world.
3. It makes little reference to individual control or action.
4. The theory also makes little reference to the tensions and conflicts between social groups in society or to issues of power.
5. There is little focus on how characteristics such as gender, social class, race and ethnicity create inequalities within age cohorts.

REF: 26-28

3. Describe what is meant by the term “risk society” as defined by Marshall and Bengton (2011).

ANS:

Student answers should include the following:

There are certain inherent risks in life. An example would be the great recession of 2008. The recession demonstrated the uncertainties that can be expected in modern life when there is a crash of economic systems around the world. The risk society is one in which social institutions provide less “insurance” against the vicissitudes of life, such as job loss or loss of one’s health, and individuals are expected to assume responsibility to navigate these risks.”

REF: 32-33

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Describe the framework of narrative gerontology, and provide three examples of narrative gerontology to explain this approach to the study of aging.

ANS:

Student answers will vary, but should include the following:

Narrative gerontology seeks to understand aging from the “inside” of aging by examining the narratives or life stories that people tell in order to organize and make sense of their lives, and their experiences of aging.

Individual examples will vary.

REF: 31-32

2. List and discuss some of the larger-scale organizations performing gerontological research in Canada.

ANS:

Student answers will vary, but should include the following:

Gerontology research in Canada has been undergoing some important shifts. The federal government is also funding a number of research studies. Some of the sources of information include the following organizations:

1. The Institute of Aging (IA) is a community of researchers from universities and hospitals across Canada. It also includes practitioners, volunteer health organizations, and older adults. They share a common goal: to increase knowledge about aging, to promote healthy aging, and to address the challenges of an aging population.

2. The Social and Economic Dimensions of an Aging Population (SEDAP) is a multidisciplinary research program located at McMaster University. The first phase of the program ran from 1999 to 2004. The second phase ran from 2005 to 2011. Both projects received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). These projects produced research on a wide range of social and economic issues that will help to shape policies and programs to improve the lives of older Canadians.

3. In 2003, another interdisciplinary project entitled Workforce Aging in the New Economy: A Comparative Study of Information Technology Employment received funding from the SSHRC, and studied how growth in information technology, employment, and workforce aging in several countries has impacted the world. The results will assist with responding to an aging workforce and diversity in the workplace.

REF: 41-42

3. Explain the feminist approach to aging. Then conduct research (on the Internet or in your local community) to find a woman who believes in the feminist approach. What are her theories about aging? Do you agree with her perspective? Explain.

ANS:

Student answers will vary, but should include the following:

The feminist approach views gender as a defining characteristic in social interaction and life experiences, as well as in the process and experience of aging; gender is seen as socially constructed, with men being more advantaged than women in society.

Some famous Canadian feminists include Therese Casgrain, Judy Rebick, Rita McNeil, Sarah McLachlan, Nellie McClung, Agnes Macphail, Maureen McTeer, Alanis Morissette, and Ellen Page.

REF: 30-31