The course will explore two very rich historiographies that range widely across time and space and deploy methods and approaches that emphasize religion and culture, economy and society, health, demography and public policy. Much of the course will concern early modern and modern Europe, but we will also pay attention to notable works in ancient and medieval history, American history, and non-western (especially Asian) histories. Our approach to the history of old age will require us to focus on gender and family, property and intergenerational relations, medical literature and institutions, pensions and social security arrangements, ageism and individual subjectivities. Our exploration of the history of death will pay much attention to religion and secularization as well as histories of the body and its disposal, individual and mass death, and commemorative practices. I anticipate that most students will write historiographical papers, but there will also be opportunities to do research in primary sources.

Course goals and expected outcomes: Students will come away from the class with a knowledge of the essential literature in the histories of old age and death. They will consider a wide range of approaches as well as periods and places and delve more deeply into two or three particular historical contexts in their written work. By the end of the course they will have gained experience reporting on and discussing recent scholarship that touches upon social, cultural, economic, demographic, and political history and connects multiple parts of the world.

Requirements:
Active participation in class discussions of assigned readings (20%).

One 5-page paper reviewing at least three published works on the history of aging and/or the aged (20%).

One 5-page paper reviewing at least three published works on the history of death (20%).

One 10-15-page paper exploring an aspect of the history of age or death (40%). Material from one of the earlier papers may be incorporated into this paper, but the context in time and space should be sufficiently limited to permit a deep examination of the problem and the methodologies deployed. Alternatively, students may choose to produce a research paper rooted in primary sources. Either way, the topic and bibliography must be approved in consultation with the instructor. Historiographical papers should be based upon 10-12 sources. Bibliographies for original research papers will also include appropriate secondary sources, but the total number of sources will depend upon the nature of the available primary sources.

Background Readings: There are no assignments in advance of our first meeting, but those seeking an introduction to our subject matter might consult a short book and an article that were intended for undergraduates. On old age, see David G. Troyansky, Aging in World History
(Routledge, 2016). On death, see David G. Troyansky, “Death,” in Encyclopedia of European Social History, edited by Peter N. Stearns (New York, 2001), Vol. 2, pp. 219-233. Course bibliographies (pp. 6-20 of this syllabus) are partly drawn from those works and will give you a quick sense of the diversity of research on the two themes.

**Schedule:**

Jan. 29. **Introduction to the course. Reflections on two major historiographies.**


May 13. **Presentations.**

May 20 **Final papers are due.**