

Department of English, Carleton University

ENGL 5806F

Fall 2012

*** Preliminary Course Outline / Subject to Change

Studies in Canadian Literature II- Ideologies of Aging in Contemporary Canadian Writing

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Course description:

The rapid aging of the population has been characterized as a phenomenon whose effects on our world will be of a magnitude on a par with climate change and peak oil: in his recent book *Shock of Gray*, Ted Fishman writes that by the year 2030, the number of people over 65 will have reached one billion, and those over 50 will, for the first time in history, outnumber those under 17. In the midst of this kind of rhetoric of crisis, it is especially important that we examine very closely the ways in which we view the aging process and the elderly themselves (who stand to bear the blame for a demographic shift whose causes are in fact multiple and complicated), and this course looks at how literary texts can help us to do this. The course will give you the opportunity to read a variety of Canadian texts including novels, short stories, and films from the 1960s to the present, and to discuss the ways in which they participate in shaping perceptions of aging and old age in 20th and 21st-century Canadian culture. You will be aided in this by a course pack of secondary readings designed to introduce you to the methodologies used within the field of age studies.