

## **Redefining Old Age: The New Story of Growing Older**

**OLLI-UA - Spring 2026**

### **Syllabus**

Linda Hollis, PhD, CPG

[lindahollis@arizona.edu](mailto:lindahollis@arizona.edu)

Tuesdays, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

January 27 – March 31, 2026

Online (Zoom)

### **Course Description:**

By intentionally including the term “Old Age” in the title, this course provides a space for thoughtful conversation, storytelling, and reflection. Together, we will explore how old age is defined, experienced, and understood, both personally and culturally. Each session centers on a theme related to aging and later life. The course emphasizes lived experience, mutual learning, and the power of shared stories. Topics are grounded in Dr. Hollis’s coursework at the University of Arizona and inspired by Dr. Butler’s 1975 book, *Why Survive? Being Old in America*.

### **Course Participation:**

We will meet for 10 weeks. I truly hope to see you (with cameras on when possible), as our discussions are personal. The Zoom room will open approximately 5 minutes before the start time with the aim of beginning promptly at 11:00am. With participant consent, I may collect selected stories or reflections for future educational purposes. If you would like to share reflections in writing, you are more than willing to do so (if you share your reflections in writing, please share, “*I consent for this information to be used for educational purposes.*” Participation in this is always voluntary, and no identifying information will be shared.

### **Course Format:**

This course is highly interactive and discussion-based. Sessions will include:

- A brief introduction to the topic of the week
- Guided discussion questions
- Voluntary storytelling and reflections (individually or in small groups)
- Occasional activities
- A short preview of the following week’s topic (any “homework” is always optional)

### **Respectful Conversations**

This course is grounded in respect, curiosity, and community. Because we will be discussing personal experiences, and because we want to ensure everyone who wishes to share has space to do so, I ask that we agree to the following shared guidelines:

- Listen to understand – not to respond or debate
- Honor lived experiences – there is no single way to age
- Speak from our own experiences
- Respect the confidentiality of one another
- Be mindful of time, so others have a chance to share
- Participation is always voluntary

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**Tentative Topic Schedule:**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>
January 27	Why do we need to redefine old age? Why do stories matter? Language Introduction
February 3	Identity and Self-Discovery: Age vs Events
February 10	Ageism and Invisibility: Seen, unseen, and misunderstood
February 17	Caregiving Across the Life Course
February 24	Community, Connection, Belonging, and Social Isolation
March 3	Aging in the Right Place
March 10	Health, Vitality, and Resilience
March 17	Whole-Person Wellbeing
March 24	Meaning, Purpose, and Legacy
March 31	Wrap Up