



GERO-504: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

Effective Term

Spring 2025

BOT Approval Date

04/11/2024

Discipline

GERO - Gerontology-Aging Studies

Course Number

504

Course Title

Introduction to Social Gerontology

Short Title

Introduction to Gerontology

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units**Lecture Units**

3.00

Total Units

3

Hours**Lecture Contact Hours**

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education**Distance Education Type**

Both Fully Online and Hybrid Online

Fully Online Delivery Requirements:

- a. Students must be notified via the college schedule of classes and the syllabus for the class if proctored tests are required for this course
- b. Any planned face-to-face meetings, such as an orientation or study session, must be optional

c. The MSJC curriculum committee requires the use of accessible, asynchronous discussion as a component of every fully online course

Are you using publisher content?

No

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times.

ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

Additional Regular Substantive Interaction

Discussion boards- Course and technical issues are addressed in a separate discussion board. It is recommended that faculty will respond within 48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

E-mail Communication - E-mail may reinforce announcements and discussion board communication. It is recommended that the faculty will respond within 48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

Catalog Description

This course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the multidisciplinary field of gerontology, incorporating several academic disciplines or specializations. Substantive, conceptual, and methodological issues central to studying aging and life-course is explored. Particular attention is given to the following topics: the origins and intent of gerontology as a field; aging demographics; cross-cultural perspectives on aging; economics; stereotypes of aging and ageism; social policies and programs; mid- and late-life transitions; diversity and aging; bio/psych/social aspects of aging; and health and illness in later life. The discipline of gerontology is also presented in terms of the direct and immediate relevance to a rapidly and dramatically aging population.

Attach Supporting Documents

Sample Program Map Gerontology with Gerotechnology Certificate of Achievement (Revised April 2023).pdf

Riverside County Office on Aging Report.pdf

California Master Plan for Aging.pdf

AGHE Competencies.pdf

Centers for Excellence LMI_Gerontology.pdf

Occupational Outlook_ Social and Community Service Managers _ US Bureau of Labor Statistics.pdf

Deans Meeting_Gerontology-Aging Studies.pdf

Centers for Excellents LMI_Human Services.pdf

Occupational Outlook_Medical and Health Services Managers.pdf

Sample Program Map Gerontology with Mental Health Certificate of Achievement (Revised April 2023).pdf

Sample Program Map Gerontology with Caregiving (Revised April 2023) (1).pdf

Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

1309.00* - *Gerontology

CIP Code

30.1101 - Gerontology.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

GE Information**Check GE Types Requested**

AA/AS B2 - Social & Behavioral Sciences

Learning Objectives**Learning Objectives****Learning Objective**

1. Discuss and understand social factors that affect physiological aging from a gerontological perspective.
2. Analyze historical changes in the economic and social positions of young and old in terms of social identity, rights, laws and policies and the evolution of aging in a multicultural, widely diverse, growing aging population.
3. Define and describe ageism, and its parallels to racism and sexism from a gerontological perspective.
4. Investigate theories of aging, explanations of processes and variation in aging from a gerontological perspective.
5. Explore and identify socio-environmental variables that impact the aging experience including the impact of demographic changes that bring growing diversity to the older population in terms of cultural experience, variations in economic status, and how gender, education and both physical and cognitive ability influence access quality of life.
6. Research and deconstruct social problems and social policy debates constructed around dramatic increases in the aging population from a gerontological perspective.
7. Identify demographic and social trends for aging in more-developed and less-developed societies and the challenges facing vulnerable older adults in terms of healthcare and self-sufficiency within the community, state and federal context.
8. Describe changes in individual identities and social relationships with increased life expectancy.
9. Explore changes in the family structure associated with increased life expectancy from a gerontological perspective.
10. Research and examine changes in the workplace and labor market associated with an aging population from a gerontological perspective.
11. Understand sociological research on aging from a gerontological perspective: research design and controversies
12. Integrate broader perspectives of multidisciplinary knowledge of aging into thinking and being.

Learning Outcome Information**Course Learning Outcomes****Learning Outcome**

1. Student will understand how diversity and differences characterize and shape the aging experience.
2. Student will demonstrate awareness of and manages the influence of personal age bias.
3. Student will demonstrate an understanding of the myths and stereotypes related to older adults and ageism.
4. Student will differentiate between different patterns of health and illness in later life in relation to race/ethnicity, gender and culture.

Program Learning Outcomes**Learning Outcome**

- Student will demonstrate knowledge of relationships among older adults, their families, and society.
- Student will apply current theory and research in the interdisciplinary field of gerontology and its role in society to assess biological, social, and psychological issues that impact older adults and those who work with and care for them.
- Student will integrate information and perspectives from various disciplines to understand the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging related to diversity and equity shape the experience of aging.
- Student will demonstrate the ability to conduct and evaluate gerontological information and research using a variety of methods
- Student will understand and evaluate social policy and its impact on programs and services for older adults and examine how issues
- Student will express ideas effectively in oral and written formats.

Student will analyze critical issues, aspects of ageism in American society and socially conscious behavior regarding the older population and apply knowledge to the field of aging.

Student will apply acquired interdisciplinary knowledge of older adults in varied career applications, such as the design of services for older adults, patient care, and engineering and technology for independent living.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Communication: The student will effectively express and exchange ideas through listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual works, and other modes of interpersonal expression.

Critical Thinking: The student will analyze problems, gather and synthesize relevant information, evaluate ideas, information, and evaluate alternative points of view to create, innovate and implement effective solutions.

Cultural Awareness and Humility: The student will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity toward individuals of diverse ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations, as well as toward those individuals with diverse abilities and socio-economic classes to respectfully interact with individuals of diverse perspectives, beliefs and values while being mindful of the limitation of their own cultural frameworks.

Social Awareness: The student will recognize and analyze the interconnectedness of global, national, and local concerns, analyzing cultural, political, social, and environmental issues from multiple perspectives and appreciate similarities and differences among cultures.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. Overview of Gerontology and Understanding the Lifecourse
 - a. Introduction to the Course - Overview and Course Requirements
 - b. What is Gerontology? What does a Gerontologist do?
 - i. Expertise in Aging
 - ii. Caregiver, Educator, Advocate
 - c. Consider what we know about aging
 - i. Understanding age as a variable
 - d. Articulate transitions related to aging over the life course
 - e. Understand how age and aging are theorized and socially constructed
 - f. Review demographics and population shifts
 - g. Examine minority and minority/majority group demographics, patterns of migration, and the impact of the Census on the distribution of funding and support.
2. Aging as a Dynamic Process
 - a. The bio-psycho-social aspects of aging
 - i. aging-related changes (senescence), sensorineural and cognitive aging, reproductive changes, performance and sensuality changes' stereotypes and misconceptions about aging including appearance, hearing, cognition, and sexuality; functional health and self-rated health
 - ii. major biological and psychological aspects of aging
 - b. What is "Social Gerontology?"
 - i. The biopsychological perspective of aging, social constructs, ageism and stereotypes, vulnerability, and elder abuse, cohorts and generations, lifestyle and sociological differences (race/ethnicity/marital status/income/education), and population/global aging.
 - ii. Articulate the significance of social location (generational cohort, gender, race, social class, education, disability) related to aging.
3. Social Supports and Connections in Later Life
 - a. Importance of social connections and social support
 - b. Issues related to aging families
 - c. Living arrangements and environmental shapes of aging
 - d. Different cultural approaches to social supports and intergenerational relationships.
4. Health and Healthcare
 - a. Examine and explore what health means in later life
 - b. Normal aging vs. aging with disease
 - c. Consider accessing, receiving, and providing formal and informal care
 - d. Examine the barriers to accessing care and services for those with economic, cognitive, or developmental challenges.
5. Caring for older adults
 - a. Unique health needs and common health alterations in older adults
 - b. Examine ethical issues related to the care of the older adult

- c. Possible types of care and interventions related to the health needs of older adults
- d. Identify the different needs of older adults based on their cultural backgrounds (including gender roles) and how caregiver bias can impact the caregiving experience.
- e. Explore challenges to equity and access to care for populations that experience historical bias (example: LGBTQI+)
- 6. Work and Retirement
 - a. Articulate trends in working, retirement, and the financing of later life
 - b. Common reasons for retirement
 - c. Examine the role of cumulative disadvantage in older adults' economics and health status.
- 7. Old Age and the Welfare State -Programs and Public Policies
 - a. Describe the kinds of programs available to aging Americans
 - b. Understand income support and healthcare programs that serve older adults.
 - c. Articulate key aspects and services provided by the Older Americans Act.
 - d. Consider the political patterns and behaviors of older adults.
 - e. Describe major social movements and generational debates.
- 8. Dying, Death, and Bereavement
 - a. Articulate key issues related to death, dying, and bereavement.
 - b. Consider what it means to have a "good death."
 - c. Age-based and sociocultural differences in attitudes toward death and dying, common reactions when facing imminent death, the process of death, concepts of palliative care and hospice care, passive vs. active euthanasia, right to die and death with dignity, the doctrine of informed consent, strategies for grieving and adjusting to widowhood.
- 9. Diverse Experiences of Aging
 - a. Reflect on identity (how older adults see and define themselves and remake their worlds as they age), agency (the capacity of people to act upon their world and not just know about or give personal significance to it), and aging.
 - b. Understand the importance of self-perception on identity development in later life
 - c. Define ageism
 - d. Describe the implications of ageism for individuals and aging
 - e. Reflect on social connections, social roles, social relationships and family aging.
 - f. Consider the distinct challenges facing many older adults of minority (race, ethnicity, gender, etc) backgrounds.
 - g. Describe age-related sources of social inequalities as they relate to diverse experiences of aging
 - h. Reflect on issues related to social stratification and inequalities
- 10. Create a New Old Age
 - a. Reflect on how to reframe aging
 - b. Understand what it means to shift the current paradigm of aging
 - c. Explore current and future trends in the field of aging
 - d. Recruitment and training of older workers, changes in the delivery of healthcare, aging and health promotion, assistive technology and gerotechnology, computer literacy among older adults, non-residential advocacy ombudsman, elder care leave, concepts of cohousing and intergenerational family housing.

Methods of Instruction

Method

Lecture

Integration

Lectures within this course offer a comprehensive exploration of a diverse range of multidisciplinary topics related to aging, amplified by accessible visual materials and an array of on-demand online resources. They serve as a gateway to the multifaceted realm of aging and the late-life experience, emphasizing key areas that have a profound impact on our understanding of this phase of life.

The lectures draw particular attention to concepts of social inequality, demographics, and the intricate interplay between aging and social policy. They delve into how older adults are perceived in the United States, shedding light on the pervasive issue of ageism and the challenges in achieving equity and access within the intricate web of diversity, economics, and self-perception as we age.

This exploration is further enriched by the incorporation of multimedia elements, including videos, websites, and interactive external resources. Notably, these resources may encompass valuable insights from authoritative sources such as the American Society on Aging, the American Association of Retired Persons, or the Gerontological Society of America. These organizations provide a wealth of research-based and practical perspectives on aging in America, enabling students to deepen their understanding of the complex and dynamic landscape of aging in the contemporary world.

DE Adaptations for MOI

To ensure accessibility needs are met, lectures can be communicated through the CMS in a variety of formats, including accessible Powerpoint presentations and lecture videos. Websites and online videos can be incorporated as part of these lectures. Lectures can be delivered through video conferencing platforms.

Method

Discussion

Integration

Engaging in discussions is a pivotal part of this course, where we explore a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary approaches to aging. These discussions, whether student-to-student as a class or within small groups, are designed to bridge the gap between existing knowledge of aging and the lifecourse with innovative paradigms. This journey involves addressing multifaceted concepts of aging, policy, ethics, diversity, caregiving, and life satisfaction, all of which are essential aspects of the aging experience.

Aging is one of the most universal human experiences, and as such, it is crucial to develop the skills to engage in meaningful dialogue about the challenges of growing older in the United States. These conversations extend beyond the classroom, equipping students with the ability to have cogent discussions with colleagues, family members, and within our broader social structure. By fostering open and constructive dialogue, we can work toward eliminating ageism and tempering the fear associated with the process of aging.

Within our course environment, discussions serve as a platform for students to exchange ideas, share their findings, and enhance their comprehension of the course objectives. This is facilitated within an inclusive space where students feel safe and respected, regardless of differing views or perspectives. Instructions for discussion boards are thoughtfully crafted to ensure accessibility for all participants. As part of our commitment to a cohesive learning experience, all communication will be conducted through a course management system (CMS), enabling seamless engagement with course content and fellow students.

DE Adaptations for MOI

To ensure accessibility needs are met, student discussion will be achieved using asynchronous threaded discussions with other students and the instructor within the CMS, or by participating in synchronous discussions using accessible video conferencing platforms. Students can also be divided into breakout groups during synchronous group meetings to compare their ideas before being brought back to the main session to compare their ideas as a class with the CMS framework to address accessibility needs.

Method

Visiting Lecturers

Integration

Guest speakers play a vital role in our journey to understand aging from a holistic perspective. They offer unique insights and expertise that provide students with a more comprehensive view of aging, embracing its biological, psychological, social, and economic dimensions. These guest speakers are carefully chosen to encompass a wide array of backgrounds and experiences.

We recognize the significance of exposing students to the wisdom of older individuals who have traversed the complexities of the aging process. Hearing from these experienced individuals offers a profound opportunity for students to gain firsthand knowledge about the challenges, joys, and insights that come with aging. These interactions not only contribute to a richer understanding of the subject but also promote a deep respect for the wisdom that older individuals carry.

In addition to older individuals, we also value the contributions of professionals who work tirelessly to support, care for, and advocate for the rights of older adults. Their experiences and expertise are invaluable in shedding light on the multifaceted needs of older individuals and the various solutions that can enhance their quality of life.

These guest speakers can come from diverse fields, including medicine, social support services, senior education and enrichment, and long-term care. By inviting experts from these areas, students have the opportunity to learn from those who are actively engaged in improving the lives of older adults. This exposure to various perspectives within the field enriches students' learning experiences and provides them with a deeper appreciation of the complexities and possibilities of aging.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Guest Speakers can join online classes via CMS videoconferencing tools. It can be synchronous or asynchronous. Instructors may also elect to post videos/media interviews of guest speakers with closed captioning and meet with accessibility requirements.

Method

Reading

Integration

Students will embark on a comprehensive reading journey that combines foundational theoretical approaches to aging, as provided by textbooks, with the imperative task of staying current with new publications and contemporary events related to aging. This dual approach offers a well-rounded understanding of the urgency surrounding aging issues, both within the confines of our course and within the broader social discourse.

In our pursuit of knowledge, students will delve into chapters from the textbook, articles, case studies, oral histories, poetry, and a diverse range of materials that serve as windows into the concepts, themes, and lived experiences central to comprehending aging from a biopsychosocial perspective. These readings are thoughtfully curated, drawing from a variety of sources and presenting a wealth of diversity in terms of authorship and content.

To ensure that our understanding of aging remains current and relevant, we will also explore relevant and recent publications. By doing so, we acknowledge the rapid shifts in cultural context surrounding aging and the pervasive issue of ageism. This dynamic and forward-looking approach equips students with a well-rounded understanding that reflects the ever-evolving landscape of aging, fostering both context and depth in our exploration of these vital topics.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Relevant readings can be delivered through materials provided in the CMS or the assigned texts, or students can access current research through MSJC's online library collections. Some papers and projects related to class readings may also use asynchronous threaded discussions in Discussion Boards, where students can compare their ideas from a reading and also compare research projects or share resources or websites related to reading content. Students can also use discussion boards to share common issues related to the project, such as Q & A forums where students can ask questions about the reading or project, and the instructor or other student can answer. Using the CMS as the repository for these discussions and readings will ensure that accessibility needs are met.

Methods of Evaluation**Method**

Class Participation

Integration

Active participation in the coursework is pivotal, given the universal nature of aging and its profound impact on our lives. Being consistently engaged with course materials and actively partaking in dialogues with classmates yields a level of real-world understanding that is truly unique to the classroom experience.

Our approach to class participation goes beyond mere assessment; it is a gateway to assessing student learning in the realm of Aging Studies. It empowers students to not only describe but also critically evaluate the concepts, terms, theories, structures, and experiences that are central to the field of aging.

Through active participation, students are challenged to delve into contemporary social problems related to aging, healthcare, public policy, end-of-life decision-making, and other topics intricately linked to the quality of life in old age. It is within the classroom experience that students have the opportunity to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, enriching their understanding and fostering a more profound connection with the multifaceted issues that aging presents.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Discussion forums and blogs within the CMS can be utilized to assess class participation in asynchronous courses and video conferencing tools can be utilized for synchronous online course meetings. The instructor will employ available accessibility features within the CMS to ensure equitable access for all students during the evaluation process. Students are encouraged to utilize submission strategies that best suit their needs, including text and video responses.

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

To ensure students have a structured means of evaluating their own learning across diverse aspects, such as demographics, social policy, the economic implications of aging at both micro and macro levels, biophysiology, and the broader expectations related to aging, we have implemented a systematic assessment approach.

At various intervals, students will encounter short objective tests that align with the course's learning objectives. These assessments are designed to be both diagnostic and evaluative, providing students with insights into their own progress. Quizzes may take various formats, encompassing objective question types such as multiple-choice, true/false, and fill in the blank, as well as more expansive long-format essays. The aim is to encompass the breadth of learning outcomes within this multifaceted field.

These quizzes and exams may undergo grading through manual evaluation or automated processes, utilizing tools such as the course management system (CMS) or scantron technology. To further support students in their learning journey, the instructor ensures timely feedback, providing correct responses, constructive comments, and grades within two weeks of the due date. This approach enables students to engage in reflective self-assessment, fostering a deeper understanding of their own learning and progress within the course.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Unit quizzes offered through CMS will assess course learning objectives. Using accessible tools, including objective tests, closed-caption video responses, or other accessible technology, students will demonstrate understanding of core course competencies. Quizzes should be timed, open book/note, focusing on course learning objectives. Quizzes may be graded manually by the instructor or through the CMS auto-grading system. The instructor will provide correct responses, comments, and grades within two weeks of the due date of these quizzes within the gradebook using the CMS.

Method

Papers

Integration

The exploration of the aging process offers a deeply personal opportunity for individuals to gain insights into themselves, their families, and their broader communities. To facilitate this introspective journey and encourage students to integrate theory, lectures, and readings into their unique voices, writing becomes a cornerstone of our approach.

Long and short form research and reflection papers, centered on multidisciplinary aspects of aging, become a canvas for students to apply the learning objectives and skills they've acquired throughout the course. These assignments challenge students to weave classroom lectures on a variety of aging topics, such as social policy, life satisfaction, cognitive function and decline, and healthcare, into their own personal experiences with aging outside the classroom.

To ensure clarity and guidance, rubrics and explicit instructions are provided to assist students in crafting their papers. These written works are evaluated with an emphasis on correctness, clarity, completeness, and precision. Within two weeks of the assignment's due date, students receive both a grade and constructive feedback from the instructor, accessible through the course management system (CMS). This process not only strengthens their academic prowess but also nurtures the capacity to integrate course material into a deeply personal narrative, fostering a more profound connection with the multifaceted nature of aging.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Evaluation of student application of aging content will be submitted via CMS. The instructor will employ available accessibility features within the CMS to ensure equitable access for all students during the evaluation process. Rubrics/clear instructions will be provided. Papers will be evaluated through correctness, clarity, completeness, and precision. The student will receive a grade and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's due date within the gradebook using the CMS.

Assignments

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Assignment Description: When I'm 90 - A Reflection

Think about yourself as an older adult and what your life will be like when you are 90 years of age.

Each of the 5 sections (physical, social, emotional/mental, financial and legacy) should only have a maximum of one paragraph written (double spaced), which is a total of FIVE paragraphs.

You may be creative and write this as a journal entry or as a letter to one of your family members or friends, or just simply as a narrative.

Evaluation:

Student submissions will be evaluated on grammatical correctness, clarity, completeness, precision, evidence of understanding, and introspection. The student will receive a grade and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's due date within the gradebook using the CMS.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The assignment will be assigned, submitted, and graded through the course management system (CMS). Online courses should make course material, including assignment instructions, supplemental resources, website links, etc., available to students through the CMS. Students will submit the assignment through the CMS and will be provided with instructor feedback through the grade book function, messaging, or other forms of confidential communication within 2 weeks of submission. Any material for students and communications must meet accessibility guidelines

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Assignment Description: Aging, On Film

Society bombards us with messages about aging, but nowhere is there a greater opportunity for deeper understanding about the late life experience than on film. Ironically, there are few films that feature older actors as primary characters, and when we do see them, they can risk being portrayed as caricature. The objective for this activity is:

- 1) Find a film (you can pick from a list provided by your instructor or do the research yourself).
- 2) View the film in its entirety, taking notes on themes that align with our course materials.
- 3) Construct a paper that discusses various aspects of aging in our society as it is represented in the film. Because it is often times easier to apply theories-concepts-issues relevant material to a particular context than to discuss them in an abstract, you should use a film that deals with aging as the "case study" around which you develop your paper.
- 4) Students will submit a 200-250 word essay sharing their observations and insights, as well as a short character analysis of at least one character in the film and how aging has influenced their experience.

Evaluation:

Based on the rubric provided, student submissions will be evaluated on grammatical correctness, clarity, completeness, precision, and evidence of thought. The student will receive a grade and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's due date within the gradebook using the CMS.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The assignment will be assigned, submitted, and graded through the course management system (CMS). Online courses should make course material, including assignment instructions, supplemental resources, website links, etc., available to students through the CMS. Students will submit the assignment through the CMS and will be provided with instructor feedback through the grade book function, messaging, or other forms of confidential communication within 2 weeks of submission. Any material for students and communications must meet accessibility guidelines

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Assignment Description: Interview with an Older Adult (A Semester Project)

Contemporary families have less age diversity than families in preindustrial periods, which limits access to differentiated perspectives, reinforces prejudice and tends to create an "us vs them" mentality. Yet, as the population becomes more widely diverse, we have the unique opportunity to gain insight into the experiences of older adults from different cultures, background and experiences. Consider the oldest Americans who lived through the last years of WW2, some as the children of soldiers, and some as the children in internment camps. Consider the broad spectrum of these collective experience and how they influenced their individual journeys through the lifecourse. We have a unique opportunity to gain understanding of how differently we individually experience aging, while at the same time drawing similarities between generations and cohorts who lived at the same time. Perhaps, we can use our collected experiences to prepare for our own aging, or to be more compassionate to the older people in our community who may face discrimination based on age, or a combination of age and background.

The use of technology and the "Youth Culture" of 21st century has segregated generations, limiting interactions and reinforcing stereotypes and ageism. Birren and Deutchman describe the benefits of intergenerational interactions such as interviews and structured conversation as ways to bridge the gap of understanding across generations. The opportunities for young people to benefit from the "wisdom of age," and elders to examine the life course can resolve intergenerational misunderstandings and develop greater empathy. (Grefe 2011) Exploring the diversity among elders and recognizing how individual experience can impact life satisfaction across the life course has been a cornerstone of gerontological studies.

"Narrative gerontology" is a process where the elderly person (gerontology) tells the history of his life (narration), a sort of retrospective of his life. The specificity of narrative gerontology exists in the inter-generational dynamics between the storyteller- the elderly person- and the story collector (of a younger generation), through informal learning for both parties and providing the elder a strategy for a "better aging". The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for students to broaden their scope of understanding beyond their own age cohort. You will interview someone over the age of 65 who is aging successfully, and share your findings in a creative presentation, case study or analysis paper

Step 1 –Identify An Interview Subject

You will identify an individual, over the age of 65, whom you believe is aging successfully. It is your responsibility to identify the individual

You may interview a family member.

Interviews must be conducted in person (or through telephone or video chat).

You may elect to interview someone who has retired from the profession you are studying.

No more than one student may interview any one individual.

Schedule three or four 1-hour sessions. (Older people tire more easily and you will get more information if you give the person time to think about the topic coming up.)

Step 2 – Organize Interview Structure:

You will be provided a variety of tools to utilize during the interview process and may choose the approach that best meets assignment criteria. The goal is to ask questions about life, social; biological; financial; political; religious and anything about family history or personal background that you find interesting and the person is willing to share!

Step 3: Conduct the Interview

Before each interview session, familiarize yourself with the questions you are going to ask, and the theoretical concepts being addressed during that time. You may find that as the semester progresses that you want to revisit prior theoretical concepts in newer interviews, which is fine.

How to Interview

At the very beginning, explain to the individual the purpose and format of the interview. Stress the fact that he/she will be helping you with an assignment and also helping others by sharing his/her experience of and advice for successful aging.

Assure the individual that only a first name will be used on the report, or a pseudonym may be used if the person prefers. He/she may remain anonymous if they wish.

Also assure the individual that he/she should feel free to decline to answer any questions with which he/she is uncomfortable or choose not to answer for whatever reason. They have however, agreed to do this interview and must expect some personal questions. If they do not answer one or two you must explain in your paper your conversation regarding any unanswered questions. Because they have agreed to do this interview it is ok to ask "why" they have chosen not to answer this question. It is very rare but if you find that more than one or two questions are objectionable to this person you should consider finding another person. too many unanswered questions can hurt your grade

You are encouraged to be creative in the way they present the results of their interview. The goal is to reflect on the experience, share the story, and demonstrate understanding of the course material.

At minimum, the end product will be an 8-10 page paper. (12 pt. type, double spaced, etc.), a comprehensive video or other creative project that accomplishes the following:

Creates a narrative about the person, his/her life experience and what you learned from them about their life and history. Tell me their story.

Analyzes how this person's life correlates to the material we have talked about in class? Draw links between lecture, text and readings to show me that you see the ties.

Reflects on YOUR experience with the process. Did you learn things that you didn't expect? What are your personal take-aways from the Tapestry and Interview experience?

Evaluation:

Student submissions will be evaluated based on the rubric provided, and feedback will be entered into the grade book on the CMS no later than 2 weeks after the due date.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The assignment will be assigned, submitted, and graded through the course management system (CMS). Online courses should make course material, including assignment instructions, supplemental resources, website links, etc., available to students through the CMS. Students will submit the assignment through the CMS and will be provided with instructor feedback through the grade book function, messaging, or other forms of confidential communication within 2 weeks of submission. Any material for students and communications must meet accessibility guidelines

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Assignment Description: Current Issues in Aging

Every day, the headlines tell us about how the world is changing. How do these changes impact us as we age? What are some of the pivotal concerns facing TODAY's older adults? This is your opportunity to explore and dig deeper into a current aging population challenge. What challenges exist for minority older adults? What are the barriers to accessing quality care, social services, transportation or legal protection from elder abuse? I want you to find the story.

Do an online search of news publications and choose a news story concerning an older person affected by a LOCAL or STATE public policy or decision.

For example, locate stories about emergency response and older adults, social dancing in the park, driving, city streets and sidewalks, long-term care, housing affordability, code enforcement, guardianship, homelessness, etc.

Make sure that you are reading "vetted" sources. For example, an article from the New York Times will be far more reliable than a blog, and a journal article will be more reliable than even the New York Times - but probably won't be a "current" event.

Examples of Vetted Sites might look like these sources:

"Want to Feel Bad? Ask TikTok how old you look." (2/28/2024) New York Times.

"Covid 19 Exposed the Faults in American's Elder Care System" (5/15/2021) Time Magazine

There are journals that publish more frequently, for example, the National Institute on Aging publishes on a monthly basis, and offers fewer local current event stories, but offers coverage of the latest news about aging like this:

"A sudden wealth loss may lead to cognitive decline," (2/8/2024) National Institute on Aging

If you used that as a foundation article, then found some news coverage about poverty and aging in your own community, that would be a very well rounded review.

Do NOT write about Medicare, pensions, or Social Security—these are not state or local policies.

Include at least three sources (articles, websites, interviews, etc.) to validate the story's authenticity - just because it is in the media doesn't mean it actually happened. Summarize the issue, tell the story, and give your thoughts on how the story relates to class material.

250-500 words (1-2 pages). Be sure to cite your sources: Bibliography or in-text citations or end-notes are acceptable.

You may choose to develop a PowerPoint with narration or a 3-5 minute video for this project. Citations are still required.

Evaluation:

Student submissions will be evaluated based on the rubric provided by the instructor, including grammatical correctness, clarity, completeness, precision and evidence of thought. The student will receive a grade and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's due date within the gradebook using the CMS.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

To ensure accessibility needs are met, student response will be submitted via CMS. Rubrics/clear instructions will be provided. Papers will be evaluated through correctness, clarity, completeness, and precision. The student will receive a grade and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's due date within the gradebook using the CMS

Course Materials

Textbooks

Quadagno, J., (2023) Aging and the Life Course: An Introduction to Social Gerontology, 8th Edition, McGraw-Hill (Most recent edition.)

Pipher, Mary, (1999) Another Country; New York: Riverhead Books.

Other Resources

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed) (2019), Washington DC: American Psychological Association

Class Size Information

Class Size

40

Class Size Category

A - Lecture/discussion 40

Diversity and Inclusion

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

Content addressing gender, diversity, culture, religion, and sexual identity as integral components of aging is thoughtfully woven into the course in a respectful and accessible manner. Gerontology, as a comprehensive field of study, adopts an interdisciplinary

perspective to delve into life-course development, playing a pivotal role in our pursuit of understanding the intricate complexities of aging. The primary objective of aging education is to champion healthy aging for individuals, communities, and societies, grounded in leadership and innovation across research, education, and practice.

Within the expansive realm of gerontology, diversity, equity, and inclusivity issues are confronted across the entire lifespan. These matters assume heightened significance when viewed through the lens of aging, as they possess the potential to amplify existing challenges related to inequality, accessibility, or equity. The inherent recognition of diversity, illustrated by phenomena like cumulative disadvantage, is not a standalone aspect of the course but rather deeply embedded in its essence, forming an integral part of our exploration of aging and its profound implications.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

The course centers on the themes of diversity and equity within the context of aging, shaping its content around the premise that aging accentuates existing differences among individuals. Beyond fostering open and regular dialogue about these distinctions, the course provides students with opportunities to express their thoughts within a safe and academically rigorous structure of discussion boards. Attention is dedicated to the various structures in which these interactions occur.

Students enjoy equal access to all learning resources through CMS, complemented by individual support from the instructor via CMS videoconferencing. Accessible videos and diverse media formats are employed to ensure success in the realm of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Instruction is delivered through recorded/captioned video and printed lectures.

Discussion boards offer dual formats – student-to-student and student-to-instructor – facilitating asynchronous discussions in print or video format using accessible CMS video conferencing software. PowerPoint or video presentations are uploaded onto Canvas for student accessibility. Exams and tests, administered fully online, encompass multiple choice, short answer essays, or other formats aligned with learning objectives. These assessments adhere to accessibility guidelines and are evaluated through CMS, emphasizing the demonstration of identification and/or understanding of major topics in the course content.

Instructor feedback is provided within two weeks through CMS. The textbooks and supplementary materials are purposefully crafted to address a segment of the population often marginalized, introducing students to a life course perspective on the aging process. Engaging interactions between instructor-to-student and student-to-student encourage students to contemplate age-related attitudes in society, broadening their understanding of their futures.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

Fostering age-positive language and nurturing an awareness of personal biases toward age are pivotal objectives in this course. These elements are essential not only to address but also to eliminate ageism, an overarching goal of our educational journey.

To achieve this, the course actively promotes student-to-student interaction, encouraging group discussions as a means of evaluation. Within these discussions, we aim to deconstruct stereotypes and confront ageism, all while exploring social policy, equity, and diversity through the unique lens of aging. These conversations serve as a platform for students to connect with their peers, sharing interpretations of course content derived from lectures and readings, asking questions, and weaving personal experiences into the broader theoretical foundations of social gerontology.

This process requires regular engagement in a safe and respectful space, enabling students to openly express their thoughts regarding the interplay between societal attitudes toward aging and the measures of life satisfaction in later life. Through the utilization of course management system (CMS) discussion forums, breakout rooms in video-conferencing software, and in-class interactions, students come together to collaboratively develop critical approaches and apply theoretical concepts. These formative activities not only enhance understanding and fluency but also contribute to the cultivation of a tightly-knit community where age-positive language and the dismantling of ageism are at the forefront of our shared goals.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Guiding students through the transformative journey of positive aging is a central role of the instructor. To challenge cultural norms and address stereotypes, fostering regular and engaging interaction with the instructor becomes a pivotal component of our educational approach.

Students are actively engaged in dialogue, facilitated through discussion boards or video exchanges, wherein the instructor introduces the multidisciplinary study of aging. This interactive platform offers students the opportunity to not only grasp theoretical concepts but also to explore how these concepts directly relate to their own lived experiences.

The instructor takes on the crucial task of grading assignments according to a predefined rubric and providing timely and constructive feedback on all assessments. In this capacity, the instructor also moderates discussions on potentially contentious topics, such as ageism, guiding these discussions and offering valuable insights.

Furthermore, instructors serve as role models, demonstrating the critical thinking process and an understanding of intersectionality. They actively encourage students to make connections between course content and their own personal experiences within the context of aging in contemporary society.

To enhance this interaction, faculty members are equipped to provide feedback on student assignments through various avenues, be it video conferencing software, the course management system (CMS) grading functionality, or one-on-one meetings with individual students. This holistic approach, guided by the instructor, empowers students to navigate the terrain of positive aging and actively challenge established stereotypes and cultural norms.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Exposing student to a diverse perspective on aging through a wide range of course materials and accessible content can create a paradigm shift that influences how students see themselves and the world around them. By creating an awareness of the pervasive social biases surrounding aging, students can be prepared for a world where the population of older adults is on a steady rise. Using a wide range of tools to expose students to material, including discussion boards, small group engagements, breakout rooms, and introspective writing opportunities, students will have exposure to a wide variety of perspectives on the aging experience. Students will not only discuss and engage, but also participate in activities that challenge their paradigms about aging from both a theoretical and deeply personal perspective. Whether working in small groups, creating presentations, sharing research findings, or collaborating on group activities such as surveys, they are continually challenged to apply multidisciplinary theoretical concepts of aging. These applications are deeply rooted in making meaningful connections to their own experiences with older adults, or contemplating their own future journeys.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

This course promotes critical thinking by asking students to reflect on how the material is relevant to their own lives, community, and family. Through readings, lectures, activities, and discussions, students will be encouraged to consider the factors that influence life satisfaction in later life, including health, social policy, psychological wellness, how senescence is perceived and experienced by individuals within a society, and how they apply this knowledge to improve the aging experience.

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