**GERO 200 - The science of adult development (Internet course)(36200R)**
Fall 2008
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## Course Description

You are probably aware that the number and proportion of people over 65 years of age has grown in recent years, both in the United States and around the world.  This trend is expected to continue well into the 21st century.  You can imagine that knowledge about aging and the likely impact of large numbers of older people on the society will therefore become increasingly important to businesses, governments and medical institutions. Already, publications such as the occupational outlook Handbook, published every two years by the US Department of Labor, have recommended people seeking careers in health, social services, and business know about trends in personal and population aging.

Gerontology 200 is a gateway course for students considering majors or minors in gerontology, which is the study of adult development an aging.  Students will be introduced to a cross section of faculty in the School of Gerontology, and they will have the opportunity to interact with our student services staff.  Each week they will be presented with different topics in gerontology written by professors from different disciplines within the field.  These disciplines include biodemography, sociology, psychology, housing, and health care.  The professors will discuss research findings from their fields, illustrating how they study aging within their own disciplines.

The class employs an ecological approach in order to emphasize intrinsic and extrinsic factors associate with aging.  The main themes of the course include universality of aging, its heterogeneity, interactions between society and the individual's ability to influence his/her own aging experience, and ethical issues.  In addition, the course facilitates the development of practical skills in assessment, management and communication in order to promote sensitivity to older adults and increase the quality of services.

## Course Objectives

This course will assist students to:

1. Describe four areas of change (biological, psychological, sociological, and economic) experienced by older people and the implications of those changes on older individuals,
2. Increase their sensitivity to the heterogeneity of older adults
3. Recognize social and cultural differences of the elderly,
4. Identify and evaluate current research findings in relation to different issues concerning aging and older adults,
5. Develop skills in assessing the indicators of normal aging and recognition of abnormality,
6. Acquire knowledge about different services for the aging and know the criteria for assessing those

services,
7. Be able to describe the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and drawbacks to a career in gerontology.

## Recommended Text

Cox, Harold, G. 2001.  Late Life: the Realities of Aging.  New Jersey, Prentice Hall.  Fifth Edition.

*Additional required readings will be assigned in the weekly online lecture.*

## Assignments and Grading

Your course grade is based on attaining the maximum points possible.  Course assignments, due dates and their value toward your final grade are summarized below.  Please note that points will be subtracted for assignments that are turned in late.

### 1. Critical Thinking Assignments
Four short Critical Thinking Assignments will be assigned during the course of the semester. These are short papers, 2-3 pages in length, designed enhance and assess your understanding of a particular concept or issues. The assignments are due the Thursday following their assignment. For example, Critical Thinking Assignment 1 will be assigned on September 11th and must be turned in by September 18th.

### 2. Cyberclass discussions
Each week students will participate in a discussion on a topic relevant to the lecture or readings using a discussion group site.  This component of the class is important, and your participation is required.  You will find a set of prompting questions meant to highlight important issues and stimulate discussion.  Depending on when you log-in to the classroom, you may also find a conversation in progress. You may log-in anytime, but we encourage you to do so at least twice a week, not just to post your answers but also to check and see how your classmates respond to the questions and your answers.

### 3. Course Paper
The course paper involves interviewing an adult over age 65 to understand his/her own aging experience and writing a report.  The person can be a relative, an acquaintance, or someone that you do not know personally.  Before you start, tell the person that you would like to ask him or her some questions for your class.  You will need to explain informed consent, that is, the person's right to not answer questions they don't want to answer.  Collecting information for this course paper may involve multiple interviews of the same individual.  A list of questions will be provided to you later in the course with instructions.
The paper should be based on the answers/notes from your interviews.  We will accept typed papers up to 20 pages that are double-spaced, with a 1-inch margin on all sides and maximum font size of 12.  You can organize your paper according to the questions asked or any format that would allow the life story of the person you interviewed to flow.

### 4. Midterm and Final Exam
A midterm exam and a final have been scheduled on October 16 and December 5, respectively. Please make sure you mark these dates on your calendar. The Midterm exams will be short essay style questions on information you have consumed for each module. They are not cumulative. Don't get hung up on the details - understand the big picture.

| Assignment | Percentage Value |
|---|---|
| Critical thinking assignments (5 points each) | 20% |
| Cyberclass discussion participation | 15% |
| Course paper | 25% |
| Midterm exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

Please look at the course outline to calendar the dates when each writing assignment and exam (midterm and final) occurs.

## Communication

Since this is an online course, we will rely primarily on e-mail to communicate with one another. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. We will try to respond to your questions within 48 hours.

I will strictly adhere to the University Student Conduct Code®s established expectations of academic honesty. This means students® work should be submitted with the respect for the intellectual property rights of others; the ideas and wordings of another write must be acknowledged and appropriately used.
According to SCAMPUS University Governance sections 11.00 and 11.11, plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of others® works. It includes:

1. "the submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student®s own work, whether the material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;"
2. "the submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style;" and
3. "Improper acknowledgement of sources in essays or papers."[1]

Plagiarism is serious student misconduct. If such behavior is found, the instructor has the responsibility to report to the Office of Student Conduct and may apply appropriate sanctions to students who violate principles of academic integrity.

## Disabilities Services and Programs
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.