Outline of Instruction

Division: Social Sciences  Area: Sociology
Course Number: SOC 160  Course Name: Social Gerontology
Prerequisite: NONE  Corequisite: NONE

Hours Required:  Class: 45  Lab: 0  Credits: 3

Course Description/Purpose

This course focuses on the aged as a social subculture of the United States. How roles and status change with age in relation to family and major social institutions and the adjustments that individuals make to these changes are examined. The impact of an aging population on society is also discussed. Special attention will be placed on similarities and differences in aging and change related to an individual’s gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Major Units

- Introduction to the Field of Gerontology
- Research Methods for Studying the Aged
- Societal Responses to Aging, Present and Past
- Social Consequences of Physical Aging
- Social Psychology of Aging
- Social Supports
- Care Givers, Formal and Informal
- Living Arrangements’ Impact on Social Interactions
- Productive Aging: Issues Related to Work and Leisure of the Elderly
- Social Policies
- Cross-Cultural Experiences
- Bereavement, Grief and Mourning Rituals

Educational Course Outcomes

Student learning will be assessed by a variety of methods, including, but not limited to tests, papers, projects, laboratory/clinical exercises and examinations, presentations, simulations, homework assignments, and instructor observations:

Cognitive  Each student will be expected to sensibly identify and recognize:

- social gerontology and other related concepts;
• the relevance of studying social gerontology;

• similarities and differences in roles of older people in stable, preliterate, or primitive cultures;

• cross-cultural and historical issues, such as societal norms of aging;

• the impact that physical aging has on the older person’s ability to interact with the social and physical environments and possible modifications that can be made to accommodate for physical changes;

• the demography of aging, such as mortality, morbidity, and general health status;

• describe and analyze research methods for studying the aged;

• changes in social relationships that occur in late adulthood;

• the importance of social supports, particularly family, neighbors and friends, to quality of life;

• challenges faced by caregivers and possible supports to alleviate the negative outcomes;

• how where the elderly live affects their social interactions;

• how socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and culture, and race influence productive aging and interactions and activities;

• social problems faced by the elderly, such as retirement, poverty, widowhood, special needs, access to health care and needing health care, barriers to service delivery, and so on;

• social policies that impact the elderly

Performance Each student will be expected to sensibly improve through demonstration and practice of the following skills:

• research social service agencies in the community which focus on care of the elderly;

• visit at least one social service agency and present relevant information regarding their services to the class.

Affective Each student will be expected to commit themselves to each class period physically, mentally and emotionally:

• appreciate that the aging process is a subjective one and can be influenced positively by studying the aging process;

• meet with elderly people and identify ways in which older persons are not socially different than youthful ones;

• plan for successful aging;

• appreciate the importance of ethical conduct in research on societal factors related to childhood and aging.

SS/pf—6/04