

ONLINE INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE IN GERONTOLOGY

ISP 7998
3 CREDITS

FALL TERM 2007

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

Online office hours:
Wednesday:9:00-10:00p.m.

Required Text:

Moody, Harry R. (2006). *Aging: Concepts and Controversies*. Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Electronic Reserves (pdf files of assigned articles and chapters)

Modules: journal articles, chapters, websites as directed in each module

Course Description:

The Interdisciplinary Seminar in Gerontology is a required course for the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. The overall goal of the course is to provide a multidisciplinary conceptual framework for the study of gerontology and to assist gerontology students to develop the skills and knowledge needed to understand major issues in theory, research, and practice. The course is designed to familiarize the student with the process of critical reading of gerontological research from multiple disciplines to solve practical problems.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide an overview of the interdisciplinary field and the contributions made to it by researchers, scholars and practitioners from multiple disciplines.
2. To provide an opportunity to examine attitudes toward aging and how they influence interactions at all levels.
3. To provide an introduction to the policy, service delivery and professional components of the field of aging.
4. To identify and describe major issues in research as these relate to the multidisciplinary facets of gerontology.
5. To provide a structured online experience capitalizing on technology and offering a unique learning experience.

Course Rationale:

Gerontology is an interdisciplinary field to which scholars trained in many disciplines and practitioners from several fields contribute. Students entering the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program come from a wide variety of academic and professional backgrounds. While many have experience and have worked in the field of aging, most have not had an opportunity to study gerontology in an academic setting and are not familiar with the specialized vocabulary, research questions, methodology, and modes of thought of gerontology. Therefore, the foundation of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program is a course specifically designed to introduce students to the multidisciplinary literature of the field and to help them develop the skills, competencies, and knowledge base necessary for success as graduate students and transferable to their work as professionals.

Teaching Methods:

This seminar will be offered fully online. (However, a CD has been prepared and can be picked up at the Institute of Gerontology after September 5th.) Students will be at the center of the learning process, involved heavily in discourse about topics in aging. The instructor's role will be more as coach and facilitator than teacher. Students will be expected to read all the assigned readings and participate in discussion groups and boards posing critical questions related to readings and material found in each module folder. The professor has arranged a broad, representative mix of readings and material presented by professors of gerontology from numerous disciplines. The state of gerontological knowledge and experience in Detroit, at Wayne State and in the IOG, is highly respected and a powerful source from which to draw.

How is the course organized?

There are 14 modules following the opening session. At the beginning of each module week, log on to the Blackboard course site and go to the "Modules" folder. Open the module folder for the current week and begin with the document titled, "Description of Module." Read the material and follow the directions and you should have little (or no) difficulty. All documents/projects are due by 10:00 p.m. on the date listed (Fridays) unless otherwise noted. This is not a self-paced course but a structured online experience capitalizing on technology and offering a unique learning experience.

- All class assignments should be word processed (or typed), double-spaced (pages numbered).
- Material taken from other sources must be identified in an appropriate and adequate manner. Citations should give full credit to the originator of the work.
- A standard reference system such as the one adopted by the American Psychological Association should be used in all papers. Format and presentation of citations and bibliographies will be counted in grading papers.
- Grammar and spelling will be counted in grading papers. Use complete sentences and organize your thoughts in each paragraph.
- Written assignments submitted late will be receive 1 point off per day late.

Grades and Grading:

Due dates and guidelines for all assignments are stated in the module folders:

Final grades will be based on the following weights:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade
1. Participation in Weekly Discussion Boards	20
2. Completion of course activities and quizzes	15
3. Short Papers (10% each)	30
4. Write-up (Interview Older Adult)	15
4. Final Paper	20
TOTAL	100

Grade Scale:

A	= 94-100
A-	= 90-93
B+	= 87-89
B	= 83-86
B-	= 80-82
C+	= 77-79
C	= 73-76
C-	= 70-72
Under 70	= Failing

COURSE MODULES

MODULE 1. You may pick up a CD with all lectures (some with sound take a long time to open online) at Institute of Gerontology after September 5th– 2nd floor Knapp Building, 87 E. Ferry (corner John R & Ferry)

SEMINAR TOPIC: Orientation to the Online Gerontology Course

Overview of course and intro to Blackboard

Purpose and aim of course

Overview of syllabus, text, and assigned readings

Blackboard features

Experiential Activity: What do you know about aging?

What's Your Aging IQ?

The "Facts on Aging Quiz"

ASSIGNMENT DUE (September 14)

Develop a personal homepage on Blackboard course site.

MODULES 2-5 WILL BE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF AGING

MODULE 2 September 14-Sept. 21

TOPIC: AGING SERVICES AND POLICY (DON GELFAND, SOCIOLOGY, retired)

2a. What is the Aging Network and how is it structured?

2b. What are the services and professional organizations in the field of aging?

MODULE 3. September 21-28

TOPIC: PUBLIC POLICY, MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY (TOM JANKOWSKI, IOG & POLITICAL SCIENCE)

MODULE 4:

September 28-October 5

TOPIC: CULTURE/RACE/ETHNICITY (CHAPLESKI & MARK LUBORSKY, IOG & ANTHROPOLOGY)

MODULE 5:

October 5-12

TOPIC: SELF & SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS (MELISSA FRANKS, formerly IOG & KARMANOS)

MODULES 6-7 WILL BE ON PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF AGING

MODULE 6:

October 12- 19

TOPIC: THE BODY AND AGING / BIOLOGICAL AGING (CHAPLESKI)

PAPER 1 DUE OCTOBER 19th

MODULE 7:

October 19-26

TOPIC: AGING & DISABILITY (CATHY LYSACK, IOG & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY)

MODULES 8-10 WILL BE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AGING

MODULE 8:

October 26-November 2

TOPIC: COGNITIVE AGING – THE AGING BRAIN (SCOTT MOFFAT, IOG & PSYCHOLOGY)

MODULE 9:

November 2-9

TOPIC: LINKING RESOURCES ON AGING (JENNY MENDEZ. EDUCATION DIRECTOR IOG)

MODULE 10:

November 9-16

TOPIC: MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT & DEPRESSION (PETER LICHTENBERG, IOG, PSYCHOLOGY)

PAPER 2 DUE NOVEMBER 16TH

MODULES 11-12 WILL BE ON SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF AGING & AGING SUCCESSFULLY

MODULE 11:

November 16-23

TOPIC: SPIRITUALITY & AGING (ELIZABETH CHAPLESKI, IOG & INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES)

MODULE 12:

November 23-30

**TOPIC: AGING SUCCESSFULLY & RETIREMENT (CHAPLESKI & STUART
NEUFELD, IOG)**

INTERVIEW WRITE-UP DUE NOVEMBER 30th

MODULE 13: AGING CONTEXT & ENVIRONMENT

MODULE 13:

November 30-December 7

**TOPIC: HUMAN FACTORS & ENVIRONMENTAL FIT (DARIN ELLIS,
ENGINEERING)**

PAPER 3 DUE DECEMBER 7th

MODULE 14: December 7-14

CLASS CONCLUSION – SEMESTER DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION

(FINAL PAPER DUE BY DECEMBER 17)

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT

Participation in Weekly Module Discussion Boards (not the Tea Room or Please! Help Me) contributes to 20% of your final grade in this class. You will receive points for discussion that will be posted in the on-line grade book. Points are allocated as follows:

- 2 possible points for fulfilling the discussion requirement (2 postings a week)
- 2 possible points for thoughtful, considered and informed responses to a classmate (or to me)
- 1 possible points for direct references to the text, lecture or assigned readings.

This makes a total of 5 possible points a week for discussion

GUIDELINES FOR SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENT(S)

Three short papers--one for each of 3 Course Content Areas:

- 1. Social & Economic Aspects of Aging (Modules 2-5)
Due October 19th**
- 2. Physical or Psychological Aspects of Aging (Modules 6-10)
Due November 16th**
- 3. Spiritual Aspects of Aging/Aging Successfully/Retirement (Modules 11-12)
Due December 7th**

- 1) Choose which of the sub-topics within the general course content area you wish to write your paper(s) about.
- 2) State the problem or subject area you are interested in exploring.
- 3) Ask a critical question that can be addressed by the literature, lecture, research findings discussed in course modules.
- 4) Why is this an important question? Discuss the significance of this problem for research, education and/or practice.
- 5) Present evidence that both supports and perhaps questions your critical question and its potential answer(s).
- 6) What would you recommend to address your problem and its solutions in the future?

Some examples of topics are: Are services for older Americans designed to help those most in need of them? What constitutes culturally competent practice with older adults and why does it matter? How can older people maintain cognitive performance? Is 'aging successfully' about how old we look? What is the relationship between spirituality and health? Is the U.S. system of health insurance for elders adequate and equitable? And any one of these topics can be applied to specific subpopulations, i.e., African American, American Indian, Latino/Hispanic, Arab-American, women, the oldest-old, etc.

Each paper should be 3-4 pages in length, following standards for written assignments. Each paper will account for ten (10) percent of the final grade.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW WITH OLDER ADULT

Interview an Older Adult (someone over age 65—preferably older than 70) and submit a write-up of the results of your interview. I have placed 2 examples of questionnaires that you might want to use in the interview. Decide which of these—or suggest combinations of both questionnaires if you wish—you want to use for your interviews. Each person will conduct their interview with an older adult—someone you know (but do not live with) such as an aunt or uncle, neighbor or member of a church, synagogue, senior center or other organization where you have access. Choose the questions that will provide the information you wish to know about and submit your choice of questions to me before conducting the interview. Then you can select your interviewee and conduct your interview.

Each interview will be unique. It is a good idea to audiotape your interview as it helps when you are writing up the results.

Provide a demographic description of the person interviewed (no names please). For example: “This is a 70 year old male who emigrated from Mexico in his early forties, now retired and living in Detroit.” Then discuss the topic you chose and the results of the interview. Did you learn anything new about the person? Using some of the material from the course modules to develop your topic approach – ‘possible selves in retirement’, ‘what brings meaning to their life’, ‘how do they hope to delay chronic health problems’, ‘do they do things to retain cognitive abilities’, ‘is retirement what they expected’, ‘do they know about and use services designed for older people’?

Write-ups of the Interview with Older Adult should include the interview schedule and a 5-6 page write-up of results.

DUE NOVEMBER 30th.

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL ASSIGNMENT – DUE DECEMBER 17th

“Interdisciplinary Online Learning Synthesis”

In 6-7 double-spaced, word processed pages, synthesize the online course experience. You may integrate reading materials used in the course (both text and electronic reserves), as well as quotations from discussion boards and your group. Use APA guidelines for references used or MLA.

Using your entries into Weekly Discussion Boards, review all entries and analyze the content in some meaningful manner.

- Is there evidence of development or growth in your knowledge of both aging theory and practice?
- Look for themes that have emerged.
- Look for critical experiences or observations that changed your awareness or attitudes about aging.
- Quote yourself (or others – but cite them) to support the themes and experiences.
- Use material from readings to support and confirm some of your analyses.
- Summarize the purpose and utility of the (online discussion) reflective process. What did you find most challenging and difficult about “reflecting”? Will using this type of reflective process help you in other areas of your life? If so, how?
- Discuss the pros and cons of this form of learning. What have you missed, if anything, that you might have experienced in in-class instruction?