SYLLABUS
INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN AGING
Gerontology 101- DISTANCE EDUCATION
Fall 2013

Schedule # 21531

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COURSE SYLLABUS

**Overview:**

Gerontology 101 is an introduction to the field of human aging. The course of study will include a multidisciplinary examination of the way in which human aging is viewed – how we perceive the process of growing older and how society responds to the issues of aging. The class will look at aging from multiple perspectives that include the social, political and biological sciences, arts and humanities, care giving and social services. Particular emphasis will be placed on how these issues will become prominent with the advent of the Baby Boomers.

This is a totally online course with no scheduled face-to-face meetings. All class meetings, activities, and exams take place online. The instructor and students will meet in a virtual classroom on Thursday from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Students are expected to participate in at least six sessions throughout the semester, however, the best plan for success is to attend all sessions and take thorough notes during each session. The instructor delivers lectures, share applications, and communicate with students in real time via Blackboard Collaborative, which is a synchronous online tool that can only be accessed on Blackboard.

It takes at least 24 hours from the time students enroll in the course until they can have access to Blackboard and then be able to logging into Blackboard Collaborative. Blackboard support for students can be found at the following link: [http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/BB9/index.html](http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/BB9/index.html). It is highly recommended that students run the Blackboard Collaborative Wizard well before participating in the virtual classroom sessions to ensure that the computer is setup and ready to use Blackboard Collaborative. Students are not required to complete the voice recording step of the set-up since students are not required to speak during the Blackboard Collaborative Classroom, and have the option of text messaging to communicate with instructor and other students. However, students are expected to either call (877) 382-2293 or visit the following website on how to set up their system for Collaborate and to check whether their computer system is ready or not before the beginning of the first session. [http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/collaborate/collaborate.html](http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/collaborate/collaborate.html)

For questions relating to gerontology-specific citations or references, students are encouraged to contact Sue Hollander, who is the library liaison for gerontology, at (619) 594-2535 or via Email (w): sholland@rohan.sdsu.edu.
Course Goals:
This course is designed to:
- Raise student awareness about the later stages of human life cycle,
- Raise student awareness about the needs and challenges facing the current generation of older adults, as well as the emerging generation of older Americans,
- Explore social/political perspectives, behavioral, and biological aspects of aging,
- Explore the ways aging affects areas such as sexuality, family relations, personality, and creativity,
- Explore existing and potential careers in the field of aging, and
- Factors that would contribute to successful aging.

Course Objectives:
At the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Define the key terms used in the field of aging'
- Describe what is known in the field of social gerontology
- Differentiate and discuss the myths and realities of aging
- Describe the range of services available to meet the needs of older adults, and
- Identify social policy issues that affect older adults.

Course Process:
The course will generally follow the chapters of the text in subject matter, but internet lectures will provide supplementary information, the main points of which may appear as examination questions. The lectures will be both synchronized and asynchronous. Synchronized is where the lecturer and the students have to be online at the same time. This will be important when there is an online guest speaker. Asynchronous is where the lecture notes can be accessed at any time within a one week window of time.

Classroom Internet time will include:
- Presentations conducted by professional guest speakers in the field of aging transmitted real time over blackboard, with questions and answer sessions, these will be synchronized sessions
- Assignments that require field trips by distance education students to meetings, workshops, and trainings about social and public policy issues concerning aging which the students are then required to write-up and submit as part of their coursework.
- Videos will be transmitted via blackboard. These videos, which can be accessed online, will be on perceptions and facts concerning the field of aging, these will be asynchronous and can be accessed by the students within one week window.

Course Standards:
Attendance & Participation: Students are expected to participate in at least six live virtual Blackboard Collaborative classroom sessions conducted on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. To earn full participation points students must log on in all sessions and contribute to discussions
during live sessions. Students are expected to complete all exercises, assignments and tests identified in the syllabus, and submit the assignments by the deadline stated in Attachment-1 of this syllabus.

**Incompletes:** University policy on an “Incomplete” is restricted to situations where a student is doing passing work in a course, but is unable to complete course requirements due to significant, documented circumstances beyond the student’s control. If, during the semester, students experience serious work, family or medical problems that might affect their ability to complete the course requirements; students are required to contact the instructor as soon as possible. There are strict guidelines and students are counseled to understand the requirements (Bulletin – Page 30).

**Instructor:** Instructors are obligated to post times when they are available to students (see Syllabus cover sheet).

**Plagiarism:** Students agree that by taking this course all required papers might be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing that your papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

**Required Text and supplementary Materials:**


**Supplementary Materials:** Include all the materials posted under “Course Documents” on Blackboard. These materials are supplements to the textbook and provide additional resources and researched on gerontological issues.

**Course Requirements:**

a) **Mid-term Examination:** There will be an online mid-term examination on Thursday, Oct 17th, which will cover the materials on units 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the required textbook, as well as the class presentations and lectures posed by the instructor.

b) **Final Examination:** An online final examination for the semester will be given on Thursday, Dec 12th. The final exam is comprehensive and will cover all the units in the required textbook, as well as the readings and lectures of the entire course.

**NOTE:** Both the mid-term and the final examinations are comprised of four sections; true/false questions (one point each), multiple choices (2 points each), short answers/ bullet points (five points each), and an essay question. The essays must be at least 5 paragraphs long (at least 5 sentences per paragraph), and must incorporate every part of the question. Exams will be posted under “course document” on Blackboard at 7:30 pm on the dates set for the exams. Exams are closed book and closed note and student have 75 minutes for mid-term and 90 minutes for final exams. Exam can also be taken on-campus; however, students are expected to give one week notice in advance. If a
student misses an exam or an assigned task, the final grade will be determined from other exams and assigned tasks and class participation.

c) Interview with a program or service administrator: Students will interview an older adult program administrator (nursing home, assisted living community, continuing care community, board and care facility, etc.) and compose a report that contains a minimum of 1,800 words response to the questions listed in Attachment 2. This report is due by Thursday, Dec 5th.

d) “Unit Assignment Questions”: The articles in the textbook are divided into 8 units. Associated with each unit are five critical thinking questions that are posted under “Assignment” on Blackboard. Each question worth 2.5 points and you are required to submit your response to each question with a minimum of 250 words by the due date (1,250 words for each unit assignments). Students must state an accurate word count at the end of their work. Please make citations and references to your textbook, supplemental materials listed in this syllabus, and PowerPoint slides posted on Blackboard as you form a response to each question. The due dates are stated in the course outline, and you would receive a score of zero for any submission past the deadline.

NOTE:
- All assignments shall be submitted through the Blackboard site. Students should not e-mail instructor outside the Blackboard environment. When logging on to Blackboard, click on “Messages”; then click on “New Message”, click on “To” under Recipients, and add the instructor’s name in the recipient list by clicking on the arrow key to the right.
- Please send your work as text in the body of your email message. “Attachments” will not be opened.
- Please include the total number of words encountered for each assignment at the end of your email message.

Extra Credit Options:
Extra credit, up to an additional 10 points toward the final grade is available. All extra credit shall be reported with a minimum of 750 words, and shall be submitted by no later than Thursday, Dec 5th. Students will have the option to do one of the following:

- Attend a seminar / conferences related to the older adults, and describe your experience and findings. See the “Course Information” on Blackboard for listing of workshops posted by the instructor.
- Conduct a face-to-face interview with an older adult relative or family friend (preferably 75+), and ask the person to share things that have been important in his/her life along with his/her fears and concerns. What were some of the major choices that this person has to make throughout his/her life? What were significant moments or events in your life? What lessons the person learned about life and living? Describe the people who guided or influenced him/her the most. What risks did he/she take in life? What regrets or unfilled desires does he/she have? What dreams or hopes do they have for the future? What advice about life do they have for young people?
- Other extra credit opportunities may be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to be informed of these opportunities as they arise.
Grading:

Students will be graded by the following proportion:

- Blackboard Collaborative Attendance / Participation: 50 points
- Program Administrator Interview Report: 100 points
- Mid-term Exam: 100 points
- Final Examination: 150 points
- Homework Assignments (Critical thinking questions / all 8 units): 100 points

Total Available Points 500 points

The following score ranges will be used for grading:

- 461 – 500 = A Superior Performance
- 450 – 460 = A-
- 441 – 449 = B+
- 411 – 440 = B Above Average Performance
- 400 – 410 = B-
- 391 – 399 = C+
- 361 – 390 = C Satisfactory Performance
- 350 – 360 = C-
- 300 – 349 = D Unacceptable
- 299 or below = F Failing

ATTACHMENT 1
TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS
WEEK 1:
Aug 29: Introduction to Gerontology
  • Review of the course syllabus & assignments
  • Overview of gerontology
    - Aged & aging for all ages
    - Social gerontology/ biogerontology/ medical gerontology (Geriatric)
    - Degree & certificate programs in gerontology
    - Career opportunities in gerontology

WEEK 2:
Sep 5: The Demography of Aging
  • Aging facts & statistics
  • Baby boomers
  • Growth & diversity in older population
  Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 1

WEEK 3:
Sep 12: The Phenomenon of Aging
  • Chronological age, psychological age, sociological age, functional age
  • Optimal aging, normal aging, pathological aging and successful aging

WEEK 4:
Sep 19: Aging Process
  • Theories in aging
    - Sociological, psychological, and biological theories of aging
    - Rowe & Kahn Model / Baltes & Baltes Definition
  • Myths & realities of Aging
  Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 2

WEEK 5:
Sep 26: Exploring Life Extension
  • Life expectancy / Life Span
  • Longevity quiz game
  • Longevity / postponing human aging
    - Is it good or bad for mankind? Living Longer … Living Better?
  • Video: Immortality Institute

WEEK 6:
Oct 3: Cohort & Generational Differences
  • Current living generations
  • Challenges and rewards of intergenerational intergenerational relationships
  • Intergenerational programs and community resources
  • Video: Family Matters / San Pascual Academy
  Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 3

WEEK 7:
Oct 10: Societal Attitudes toward Old Age
  - Images of aging
  - Combating ageism
  - Stereotypes
  - Is aging a sub-culture?
- Cognitive aging
- Fighting Stereotypes & Ageism in Society

Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 4

WEEK 8:
Oct 17: Mid-term Exam

WEEK 9:
Oct 24: Aging in the New Millennium
- Overview of elder abuse
  - Abuse categories
  - Reporting abuse
  - Adult Protective Services
- Overview of Alzheimer’s disease
  - Symptoms and diagnosis
  - Causes and risk factors
  - Treatments and research
  - Caring for a patient with Alzheimer’s disease
- Mental Disorder
  - Depression, Dementia
  - Suicide

Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 5

WEEK 10:
Oct 31: The Health Care System in United States
- Types of health plan
  - Medicaid/ Medical/ Medicare (Part A, B, and D)
  - Indemnity/ Managed care (PPO, HMO, POS, EPO)
  - Universal Health Care System
  - Primary care physicians (gatekeepers)/ Specialists
- Out of pocket costs
  - Co-payment
  - Premium
  - Deductible
  - Maximum annual cap
- Long term care
  - Hospice care / nursing homes/ others

WEEK 11:
Nov 7: Retirement: American Dream or Dilemma?
- History of retirement
- Retirement planning from a life course perspective
  - Importance of maintaining physical and mental health
  - Effect of career choices on retirement planning
  - Financial planning for retirement (Four-Legged Stool analogy)
- Impact of retirement on roles and relationships
  - Role Theory, Continuity Theory
  - Timing/ class/ education/ gender differences/ family relationships
- Future of retirement
  - Shift from “retirement” to “productive aging”
- Age integrated vs. age segregated society
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act

Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 6

WEEK 12:

Nov 14: Caring for Aging Parents
- Types of caregivers
- Caregiving Support Services
- The Inner Circle/ Sharing the Care with Sibling
- The Eden Alternative (nursing homes)
- Sandwich generation

Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 7

WEEK 13:

Nov 21: The Experience of Dying
- Experience of Dying
  - Dying Process / Care of the Dying
  - Death as Loss- Grieving and Going On
  - Ethical & legal issues
  - Preventing Late Life Suicide
  - 5 wishes
- Leading Cause of Death Among older Adults
  - Fall & Fall Prevention / Video
  - Tobacco Use: Single most Preventable Cause of Death & Disease
  - Suicide

Assignment: Due date for Unit Assignment 8

WEEK 14:

Nov 28: Thanksgiving holiday

WEEK 15:

Dec 5: Legal and Ethical Issues
- Power of Attorney
  - Conventional/ durable
  - Living trust/ living will/advance healthcare directive
  - Consumer & financial fraud
  - Most common types of problems for seniors
  - Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP)

Public policy Issues in Aging
- Older American Acts
  - Entitlement programs for the aged
  - Structural lag and policy

- White House Conferences on Aging (WHCoA)
  - 2015 WHCoA
  - 2005 Top Resolutions

Assignment: Due date for Admin Report & Extra Credit

WEEK 16:

Dec 12: Final Exam

ATTACHMENT 2
GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW REPORT
Gerontology 101

Step 1: Look for the listings of long-term care facilities in your area. Long-term care facilities are facilities that provide rehabilitative, restorative, and/or ongoing skilled nursing care to patients or residents in need of assistance with activities of daily living. Long-term care facilities include nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, inpatient behavioral health facilities, and long-term chronic care hospitals. Choose any one of these facilities, and ask for an appointment for a face-to-face interview an Administrator at the facility. Advance notice should be given to the Administrator since these individuals held to a very tight schedule, and it is highly recommend giving them at least two weeks’ notice in advance. Be sure to mention your affiliation with the SDSU Gerontology Department and your purpose for this assignment. (Ask your instructor if you need help in identifying a facility in your area.)

Step 2 Research the facility before conducting the interview. Your interview will be much more beneficial to you and the person you interview if you know something about the facility and its operations before beginning to ask your questions (type of facility, # of residents, type of activities, etc.) Usually, programs have brochures and/or articles about themselves that you can have mailed to you or you can pick up.

Step 3 Prepare your questions in advance of the interview. If the Administrator asks you to mail him/her your questions before your appointment, do so. Your report should include answers to:

- State the name, phone #, and e-mail address of the Administrator, including the date and time of the interview.
- Describe the admissions criteria, the programs & services available within the facility, monthly costs of living in the facility, and how residents can afford to absorb the costs.
- Describe the career path that brought the Administrator to his/her current position, and the professional requirements that the Administrator have to meet to qualify for his/her occupation/position.
- Describe the current challenges that the Administrator feel are facing his/her facility, and how are these problems being handled; What changes does the Administrator see on the horizon (especially with the Baby Boomers just around the corner) that will impact on his/her industry?
- Ask the Administrator’s opinion regarding any of the subjects that you have learned during the course (societal attitudes toward old age, end-of–life decisions, caring for older adults, etc.)
- Describe your own thoughts and feelings regarding this experience in conclusion, and explain how the experience made an impact on you (any insights, new ideas, issues, points of confusion, etc.)

Step 4 Write a report (with minimum of 1800 words) that addresses the above-listed questions. Pay attention to grammar and sentence structure (these considerations will impact your grade). You would be wise to ask a close friend to review your report and suggest editorial changes before you submit your report for a grade. Also, send a note to the administrator after your interview and thank the person for his/her time and input. Please keep in mind that you are representing SDSU and students who will be taking this class in the future.

THE REPORT IS DUE BY THURSDAY DECEMBER 5, 2013
ATTACHMENT 3
WEB STIES OD INTEREST
• Initiative to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic disparities in health
  www.raceandhealth.hhs.gov

• Council on Social Work Education
  www.cswe.org

• American Association for Retired Persons
  www.aarp.org

• Alzheimer’s Association
  www.alz.org

• American Geriatric society
  www.americangeriatrics.org

• Gerontological Society of America
  www.geron.org

• American Society on Aging
  www.asaging.org

• National council on Aging
  www.ncoa.org

• National association of Social Workers
  www.naswdc.org

• Health Care Financing Administration
  www.hcfa.gov

• U.S. Administration on Aging
  www.aoa.gov

• National Institute on Aging
  www.nihgov/nia/

• U.S. Census Bureau data
  www.census.gov/

• Cross Cultural Health Care
  www.culture.org

• Administration on Aging – Statistical Information on Older Persons
  www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/stats/stapage.html