San Diego State University School of Social Work and Gerontology Program

Gerontology 400: Practicum in Gerontology
Fall Semester 2015

GERO 400A.1 Course, Schedule # 27259; Semester Hours & Seminars as Required
GERO 400B.1 Course, Schedule # 27260; Semester Hours & Seminars as Required

Marci W. Siegel, MSW, LCSW, ACSW
Office: HH 115
Phone: 619.594.6866
Email: msiegel@mail.sdsu.edu

Please use instructor email via SDSU Blackboard to identify student’s course and ensure student email communication is received. Note that email messages not sent through Blackboard may be automatically discarded (without being open) due to transmission of computer viruses.

Office Hours: Specified Mondays: 11:15am - 12:15pm (8/24, 9/21, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16, 11/30, 12/2); Wednesdays: 10:15am-11:15am; and by appointment

I. Purpose and Description

Field education, which includes placement and instruction, is an essential and irreplaceable element of the curriculum in the Gerontology programs at San Diego State University. It is the practicum learning experience that allows students to integrate classroom theory, knowledge, and practice skills in developing professional competence and identity. This content includes the use of gerontology theory in actual practice situations, skill building, and demonstrating professional standards of ethics, values, and practice, under the professional supervision of qualified gerontologists in their role as field instructors.

Gero 400A/B Course Pre-Requisites:
Gero 350, Gero 360, and Gero 370.

2015 Edition - School approved and confirmed Gero Field Practicum Site and Supervisor by May 11, 2015. Student will begin practicum experience at agency during the first week of classes (week of August 24, 2015).

II. Objectives of the Field Experience

Gerontology program objectives and outcomes integrated in field practicum experience:
1. Describe the processes of physical (biological), psychological, and social aging and related theories of aging.
2. Know about the diverse needs of the older population in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity, and/or diverse abilities.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the aging network consisting of programs and policies for the aging population.
4. Describe and understand own attitudes toward and beliefs about old age and older adults, and reflect and analyze stereotypes or attitudes towards old adults in the portrayal of aging by society.
5. Understand basic concepts of research methods necessary to describe and discuss efficacy and effectiveness of the services and program for older adults as guided and informed by empirical evidence.
6. Develop effective written, oral and interpersonal communication skills with individuals, caregivers, families, and community thru professional field experiences.
7. Demonstrate case management skills such as interviewing, assessment, and reporting writing.
8. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding necessary to describe, assess, and critique various programs, intervention and services to meet the needs of the growing aging population.
9. Demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for the needs of older adults and their families by engaging in policy formation, implementation, and analysis.
10. Understand the ethical complexities which surround issues with respect to aging.

By the end of the field experience, students will be able to:

1. Describe placement agency’s goals, philosophy, values, ethical codes, functions, roles, clientele, and services offered and how it addresses the needs of elders in that community.
2. Demonstrate case management skills such as interviewing, assessment, and reporting writing. Be able to co-facilitate various types of recreational, educational, socialization groups.
3. Be able to identify client and family’s needs; formulate a basic treatment plan and identify interventions that could be provided by case management and referrals. Example: identify need for a higher level of care; respite care for care-giver, increased recreational or socialization opportunities for elder client.
4. Be aware of the diverse needs of the older population in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity, and/or diverse abilities. Be able to identify and combat negative stereo-types through providing accurate information and education.
5. Identify age related changes in the body and mental functioning typical of the elderly as observed working with clients in the agency;
6. Describe the connection and relationship between research and practice and be able to describe assess and critique various programs, intervention and services designed for older adults.

III. Program Goals
The field experience seeks to meet the goals of the gerontology program in the practicum setting:
- Provide interdisciplinary education and training that meet the diverse needs of older people in California and in the U.S.
- Prepare students as generalist gerontologist for careers in a variety of gerontological settings such as senior centers, senior service organizations, area and state agencies on aging, supportive senior housing, public, non-profit and corporate settings, and health & long term care facilities.
- Provide students with knowledge of aging network and programs on the local, state, and federal level.
- Provide students with knowledge and skills to identify and understand stereotypes and attitude toward older adults, and emphasize their places and contributions in society.
- Prepare students with knowledge needed in describing, assessing and critiquing various programs, intervention and services designed for older adult.
- Prepare students to meet the needs of older adults with cultural competence regarding age, gender, race and ethnicity, and/or diverse abilities.
- Prepare students for evidence-based practice with older adults with appropriate research methods to develop, implement, and evaluate the aging programs and services.
Over time, partnerships have been formed with older adult/elder serving agencies and programs throughout the San Diego area. Field agencies, in conjunction with the program curriculum, have provided our gerontology program students with quality field placements in a broad group of agencies, including public, nonprofit, multi disciplinary, inpatient/outpatient settings including psychiatric settings, nursing homes, hospitals, family service agencies, hospices, community mental health, substance abuse, law enforcement, community care clinics, and senior care settings and services, etc. The result of this joint endeavor, between the department and field agency, provides learning opportunities for students to acquire the professional ethics, attitudes, knowledge, and skills which define the gerontology profession. In the end, it also provides the opportunity for students to examine their personal experience relative to involvement or interactions with elders, and assess their interest in and aptitude for professional tasks and responsibilities for practice with and for elders.

IV. Course Requirements / Assignments*

Students are under all requirements set forth in the field practicum curriculum, e.g. as noted in Undergraduate Gerontology Field Practicum policies and procedures (SSW Web pages – Field Education http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/field/program-descriptions/gerontology-undergraduate/) ; Field Practicum Seminars; forms and assignments as outlined and required; and the SDSU School of Social Work and Gerontology Program-Community Organization Service Learning Agreement.

- Please refer to syllabus and course materials on Blackboard for additional assignments and due dates, as well as class policies.

- Students are encouraged to bring in case situations from their Field Practicum to contribute to seminar discussions. They are expected to maintain client confidentiality at all times by changing names and disguising identifying information.

- It is the student’s responsibility to keep their site supervisors and agency’s apprised of gerontology practicum course information on a regular basis.

- Students are under the auspices of all School policies School curriculum, SDSU Catalog, and the School of Social Work Undergraduate Student handbook (if applicable).

*Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to review the practicum course on SDSU Blackboard for new and/or revised School policies throughout the Academic Year.

A. Practice Requirements and Course Assignments

As part of the course and total course grade, the following assignments are required: (Please note – assignments due throughout the fall semester that are left under Instructor’s office door will not be accepted.)

1. Practicum Hours Requirements and Completion:
Conducted between: August 24 – December 10, 2015 for Fall Semester only

Students are required to complete 200 hours of agency internship over the 15 weeks of the fall semester. This translates to approximately 13.5 hours per week in the agency practicum. Practicum experience at agency begins the first week of classes of fall semester (week of August 24th). These hours and course time includes the field seminar(s) held on campus, particular assignments or agency projects
and deadlines. Also, this includes time in the agency, time in conferences, and recording supervision or other documentation.

**Note:** In accordance with University policies, students cannot be holding internship hours when campus is closed during the fall semester, e.g. Labor Day holiday, Veteran’s Day holiday, Thanksgiving Day holidays. Please refer to the 2015-2016 SDSU SSW Field Education Calendar for further information, located on SSW Web site.

1. **Student Practicum Information Form (hard copy only)— Due September 3, 2015**
   Submit Practicum Information form (hard copy copy) will be only accepted for “credit” in M. W. Siegel’s mailbox only, via SW Main Office (HH-119).

   All forms are located either at the end of this syllabus and/or on Course Blackboard. A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for this component of the course.

2. **Agency Orientation Checklist (hard copy only)— Due October 1, 2015**
   Submit Agency Orientation Checklist assignment (hard copy) will be only accepted for “credit” to M. Siegel’s mailbox, via SW Main Office – HH 119.

   All forms are located either at the end of this syllabus and/or on Course Blackboard. A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for this component of the course.

3. **Student Learning Plan/Agreement (hard copy only)— Due October 1, 2015**
   Submit Agency Orientation Checklist assignment (hard copy) will be only accepted for “credit” to M. Siegel’s mailbox, via SW Main Office – HH 119.

   All forms are located either at the end of this syllabus and/or on Course Blackboard. A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for this component of the course.

4. **Student and Agency Gerontology Site Supervisor**

   Student conferences with the agency supervisor are crucial. It is recommended that regular contact (an hour per week) between students and supervisor is held. This planned interaction provides a mechanism for students to receive feedback about their performance, expectations, to discuss the various aspects of their experience, and to plan the next steps. Students are expected to come to each supervisory session prepared with questions, issues, assignments, etc. related to his/her practicum learning experiences.

   Submit all completed assignments by hard copy only to Prof. M. Siegel’s mailbox only, via SW Main Office (HH 119).

   During an evaluation conference /supervisory session, students are to be evaluated at mid-semester (after 100 hours of practicum experience completed) and at the end of the semester (after 200 hours of practicum experience completed). The Evaluation Form addresses the activities completed by the student, progress related to the learning agreement, student attitudes, strengths, skills, ability to apply theory to practice, and work needed to progress or complete by the end of the learning agreement and the semester.
Please refer “Student Evaluation by Supervisor Form” located at the end of this syllabus and/or in Course Blackboard. *A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for these two evaluations of the course.*

6. Integrative Seminars (1-2) and Seminar Participation
Note: 1st meeting seminar was posted in SDSU Class Schedule (April, 2015). Meeting room will be announced during first week of School.

The purpose of the seminar session(s) is to have a forum to share achievements in field placement, as well as peer and instructor support in addressing professional and personal challenges. Students are expected to actively participate in interactive seminar. Possible issues for discussion include: adjusting to the agency; anxiety; "culture shock;" negotiating the student’s; orientation to the agency; values and ethics; issues of confidentiality; multicultural issues; development of professional self; communication skills; assessment and analysis of client situations; and termination.

*A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for this component of the course.*

Attendance is mandatory. The expected benefits of the group process include professional and personal support, shared learning experiences, developmental growth as a group, and group task accomplishment. Absence affects the group’s cohesion and process. Students are accountable to each other and to the instructor for the success of the seminar, and they are accountable to the seminar instructor to achieve a grade.


*Submit all assignments by hard copy to Prof. M. Siegel’s mailbox only, via SW Main Office – HH 119.*

The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on learning accomplishments in the first semester.

At the end of the Fall semester, all students will complete this assignment which provides the opportunity to assess the progress made during the first semester in field and to plan for the second semester. Please see “Guidelines for Self-Assessment and Evaluation Review” located on Blackboard. *A grade of Credit/No Credit is achieved for this component of the course.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gero 400A/B Assignments</th>
<th>Formal Due Date</th>
<th>CR / NC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gero 400A/B – 1st seminar meeting at beginning of semester</td>
<td>8/26/15 - 3:30pm</td>
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<td>(mandatory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gero Student Practicum Information Form</td>
<td>9/3/15</td>
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<td>Orientation Checklist</td>
<td>10/1/15</td>
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<td>Learning Plan/Agreement</td>
<td>10/1/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gero Supervisor Evaluation - Mid-Semester</td>
<td>10/14/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>(after 100 hrs. completed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gero Supervisor Evaluation End of Semester</td>
<td>12/7/15</td>
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<td>(after 200 hrs. for entire semester completed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gero Attendance Form – Fall 2015</td>
<td>12/7/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Complete and submit with End of Semester Evaluation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Self-Assessment and Evaluation Review Assignment</td>
<td>12/7/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Narrative Paper assignment)</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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V. Grades

Grades will be administered in accordance with the policies set forth in the SDSU Catalog, and will follow the School of Social Work and Gerontology Program Grading Policy. All gerontology practicum courses in the curriculum are on a “Credit / No Credit – Cr/NC” grading system.

Total Course Grade:
For both Gero 400A and Gero 400B, students must achieve a grade of Credit for each assignment in order to achieve a grade of Credit for the entire course. A grade of No Credit for any assignment will result in a student achieving a grade of either No Credit or Incomplete for the course.

The determination of the grade for the Gerontology 400 Practicum course(s) rests with the course instructor. The student must pass the practicum agency internship and the practicum seminar components in each practicum course to receive a grade of “Credit or Incomplete”.

A student who is at risk of achieving a grade of No Credit for either course should immediately schedule a meeting with the course instructor to discuss an intervention and a possible remedial education plan. The student may also be referred to the Director of Field Education and the Undergraduate Student Advisor, as appropriate.

Student must be able to perform satisfactorily and professionally in these areas to receive a grade of “Credit”. This also includes adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, approved as the SDSU School of Social Work Academic Standards.

Incomplete Grade:
On rare occasions (e.g., severe illness, family emergency), an “incomplete” grade may be granted, provided the student meets the criteria established by University and School of Social Work & Gerontology Program policies. These criteria include: (a) the instructor must agree that extenuating circumstances prevented the student from completing the work; (b) the student does not have to make up more than 30% of the required course work; and (c) the student and the instructor will sign the “University Incomplete Authorization Form” specifying the actions needed for the student to complete the course and a time line for completion. For Field practicum courses students must complete the “incomplete course requirements” before beginning the next semester to continue the field practicum course sequence.

In accordance with School Policy, if a student discontinues his or her field practicum prior to the end of the Gero 400 Practicum Course (in Fall or Spring semesters) and the student has not met the “Incomplete Grade” criteria, the student will be required to begin the entire period of the gerontology practicum course again. In other words, former hours for the course will not apply.

Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA prior to the initial enrollment in the field practicum, and throughout the entire field practicum period. Failure to obtain these professional standings will result in the student becoming ineligible for the field practicum course and the student will be requested to withdraw from the field practicum course.
VI. Additional Policies

**SDSU Faculty Senate Disability Policy:**
San Diego State University School of Social Work abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is **your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services** at (619) 594-6473.

To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. If SDS determines that a student has a disability and is eligible for academic accommodations (e.g., extended time for taking exams, etc.), it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor.

Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from **Student Disability Services**. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Accommodation for Religious Observances:**
Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements in advance of a religious observance. However, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the professor in advance so that he or she can make the necessary arrangements. Please notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for professional arrangements can be made.

**Academic Misconduct:**
Academic misconduct is an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation, uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise, forges or falsifies academic documents or records, intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others, engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance, or assists other students in any of these acts.

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is a serious offense in academia and will be treated according to the university policy, as written in the SDSU catalog/Graduate Bulletin. Any Academic misconduct, including plagiarism infractions, will be reported to the SDSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities as is mandated by the CSU Chancellor.

If you are unsure as to what is plagiarism: Students can take the 30-minute pre- and post- online quiz: SDSU Plagiarism: The crime of intellectual property by SDSU librarian Pamela Jackson, found at: [http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28](http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28). For more information visit the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility: [http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html](http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html).

SDSU Academic Senate - University Academic Policies on Cheating and Plagiarism [http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pfacademics.html](http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pfacademics.html)

**External Resources on Plagiarism:**
Cyber plagiarism: Detection and Prevention from Penn State. Wholesale Copying, Cut & Paste, Inappropriate Paraphrase, Citation Guidelines, Practice Exercise [http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagexamples.html](http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagexamples.html)
The NASW Code of Ethics states that social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed. Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others (NASW, 1999).

Students should be careful to give appropriate authorship credit to anyone from whom they have obtained information for written assignments and class presentations, including citing books, journal articles, Internet websites, class lectures, professional colleagues, and/or classmates. The instructor has the right to check written assignments for plagiarism by entering portions of the paper into a variety of websites.

Additional Academic Misconduct situations will be handled according to University Policy. Students who are found committing other forms of academic misconduct (other than plagiarism and cheating) will also be subject to standards set forth by the University. Such action could result in failing an assignment, failing the class, or being expelled from the University. Please refer to the current edition of the Bulletin of the Graduate Division.

Honesty and Integrity:

The NASW Code of Ethics asserts that social workers should “behave in a trustworthy manner” and “not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception” (NASW, Rev 1999, Ethical Principles & Section 4.04). Social work students should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the social work value of integrity and avoid all forms of academic misconduct including: cheating, plagiarizing, stealing course examinations, falsifying data, violating copyright laws, asking another student to sign the roll for them when they are not attending class, and/or intentionally assisting another individual in any of those actions. Please note the following definitions and policies:

Course Policies (In and Out of Classroom, e.g. social media, Blackboard, student communication, email, etc.):

NASW Code of Ethics, 2008:
The NASW Code of Ethics is an academic standard at the SDSU School of Social Work. Students are expected to maintain a high standard of professionalism and to follow all the principles of the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 1996, Revised 2008). The Code of Ethics specifies that social workers should be “continually aware of the profession’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them” (NASW, 1996, Revised 2008 Ethical Principles). Adherence to the Code of Ethics includes (but is not limited to) placing clients’ interests in highest priority, maintaining client confidentiality, demonstrating appropriate professional boundaries, treating one’s colleagues with respect, and maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.

Students are required to review and be in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics at all times. NASW Code of Ethics: www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp

Confidentiality. Students are expected at all times to maintain the confidentiality of clients that they have seen or are currently seeing in their field placements or work settings.

Best interests of clients. Students should use terminology that preserves the integrity of the person (e.g., “an individual diagnosed with schizophrenia”, “an adult diagnosed with a Neurocognitive Disorder”). Individuals should not be labeled with a condition (e.g., “a schizophrenic,” or “the disabled”). Class members are encouraged to think about the source of information and its factual base before
contributing to the class discussion. When in doubt, asking questions about appropriate terms for describing a client’s diagnosis or condition is encouraged.

**Course Assignments:**

*Policy on late assignments.* The instructor expects that students will turn in the written assignments by the due dates specified in the Course Outline. Students should contact the instructor immediately (by phone or email) if unforeseen circumstances (e.g., severe illness, family emergency) prevent completion of work by the due date. If the emergency is verifiable, and the instructor agrees that it justifiably prevented student from completing the assignment, the student may negotiate an extended time frame for completing the work. Late papers will not be accepted if the student has failed to contact the instructor prior to the due date. If the paper is late for any reason other than a verifiable emergency, but has been discussed with the instructor prior to the due date, the grade for the student will be reduced by two grade levels (e.g., from A to B+), and a new due date will be established. The penalty for lateness will be increased to one full letter grade (three grade levels - e.g., from A to B) if the student still fails to turn in the assignment by the extended due date. The instructor may choose not to accept a paper that is more than ten days late, and the student would then receive a zero for the assignment.

**Attendance / Absences:** Attendance is expected. Adult learning requires diligent study of assigned readings, active participation in class discussions and attendance. Students are expected to come to class on time and stay for the entire class session. Note, attendance may be taken at the beginning of class and again after the break. Absences and partial class attendance can significantly interfere with students’ ability to meet course objectives and may impact the student grade. The instructor will excuse absences resulting from verified unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergency, etc.). Vacations and other out of town activities will not be considered to be excused absences. Also, the student’s field practicum experience should not conflict with class time (in accordance with SSW policy).

As a professional, via their Blackboard email, students should notify the instructor in advance of class by email if they need to miss class, arrive late, or leave early. If there is no notification provided to the instructor, the absence is considered to be unexcused. When students miss class, they shall take responsibility for obtaining all information discussed and presented in class and posted on Blackboard. More than one unexcused absence will result in the final letter grade being lowered by half a grade (ex. B+ to B).

**Participation/Classroom Etiquette:**

Class participation means to be actively engaged in the learning process and demonstrate professionalism. This includes demonstrating interest in class discussions, refraining from doing other work in class, passing notes, or engaging in side conversations. I encourage you to contribute comments, ask questions, and be an active participant in your education. Please respect the contributions or others.

*Respect for colleagues.* Students can show respect for one another through collaborating with the instructor to create a safe, interactive, and intellectually stimulating classroom environment. This means: (a) actively contributing one’s thoughts and opinions without monopolizing class discussions, (b) listening respectfully to one’s colleagues, and (c) respecting others’ rights to disagree and express different opinions.

*Professional boundaries.* Professional communication involves interacting with others in an assertive, genuine way that respects others’ privacy and is considerate of their needs. Students can maintain good
boundaries by being aware of their level of self-disclosure and disclosing information that can be appropriately and safely shared in an academic setting.

**Cell Phone, Social Media Free Zone:**
There will be no use of cell phones, or social media on laptops, tablets, electronic devices, etc. during class time as these may create distractions to the student’s learning experiences and process. Thus social media time, e.g., reading emails, texting, tweeting, Instagram’s, etc. are not allowed during class time. The Instructor reserves the right to request students to remove electronic devices if or when distractions occur. All technology will be closed during exams, reviews, and class exercises.

In addition, students are required to review and be in accordance with the School’s “Guidelines for the Use of Social Media” policy.

*Note: Class photos and/or recordings are not allowed at any time due to confidential discussions, case materials being presented, and for the protection of students, clients, and professional organizations.*

**Policies on Communication:**
*Communication with the Instructor:* The instructor will use Blackboard to send emails to students notifying them of documents posted on Blackboard and/or updates to course assignments. Students are responsible for assuring that: (a) they are currently registered in the course, and (b) their current email is listed on the Blackboard system.

*Blackboard:* Materials for this course, including lecture PowerPoint slides, documents, grades, etc. will be posted on Blackboard. Documents/slides may be posted on the day of or after class. Students should check Blackboard on a regular basis for updates. All instructor slides and materials posted are intended to be used as references for student review of class discussions and reading materials. Any information from the readings may be included in exam questions even if the material has not been discussed in class. Note: Not all Power Points or readings will be discussed in class.

*Office Hours:* The instructor will maintain office hours as listed on the heading of this syllabus, is available at other times by appointment, and may also schedule office hours in the San Diego Community for easy student access.

Students are encouraged to use the office hours and community scheduled times for questions related to the assigned readings or required assignments. In order to make the best use of office hour time, the instructor encourages students to schedule appointments when possible. The instructor also welcomes questions from students via email (preferred mode of communication is Bb email). Emails are viewed during business hours only (M-F). Please see contact information on the heading of this syllabus.

**VII. Optional References and Web Sites**

The **National Gerontology Core Competencies** provide a resource and reference material for students and site supervisors. They provide ideas for learning activities and guidelines for self-assessment and site supervisor evaluation of graduate student’s mastery of gerontology competencies. The National Gerontology Core Competencies provide a cross disciplinary and inter-disciplinary focus. A few apply specifically to nursing but the majority is relevant for gerontology practitioners and administrators in a variety of settings and roles.
The National Gerontology Core Competencies are drawn from the following sources:

**Gerontology:**


**Nursing:**


**Social Work:**