Gerontology 402: THE AGING NETWORK
(Spring 2016)

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PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the programs that form a network of support for the elderly and assist them in living independently and purposefully. While learning about the appropriateness of every available service for different persons and situations, the emphasis will always be on offering options and opportunities to the elderly for self-direction.

The core function of the course will be to explore the inner workings of the most common programs: regulations governing the delivery of services, relevant issues, gaps and barriers, as well as model projects and results from aging research. The course also explores who uses these resources and how they are delivered. By combining both theory and practice, the course will allow students to better understand the issues and problems related to the continuum of care of services for aging persons and prepare them to offer their expertise in any of the programs that form the aging network.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The goal of the course is to enable students to understand the network of services and programs available to motivate and support older persons as participants in their community. Students will:
1) Learn the basics of every social service program that constitutes the “aging network” (funding, policies, service delivery, requirements, challenges, program support, etc.).
2) Understand the social and psychological dynamics of help-seeking behavior: why people benefit from, do not access, or refuse to accept services.
3) Gain greater knowledge of current services, best practice models, gaps in services, unmet needs, and appropriate as well as inappropriate delivery of services.
4) Explore in-depth two different topics of interest in the aging network by means of case studies, learning activities and writing a research paper.

The course has relevance for social workers, health professionals and anyone concerned about or serving the aged. To assist in bringing to reality the concepts learned, the course will include guest speakers representing the network of services and some related videos.

REQUIRED TEXT:

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Participation

*Attendance* - Each student is expected to attend class with no more than 3 absences, and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. For every absence, there will be a deduction of 10 points from the grade under “participation” (half time attendance counts as half absence, 5 points). To have the points restored in the case of an absence, the student will need to submit a three page summary incorporating the main ideas from both the assigned book reading and powerpoint for that day (if the summary is incomplete, less than 10 points will be given). No more than three absences can be made up.

*Class Participation* - Students are expected to complete all exercises, assignments and tests by the dates identified in the syllabus. Note that for assignments late by 1 to 7 days, there will be a deduction of 10 points from the maximum possible 100 points assigned to that task, and for 8 to 15 days, the point deduction will be 20. After that time (two weeks), the assignment will not be accepted and the grade for that section will be 0 points. No papers or make up work will be accepted after the last day of class. The final paper cannot be turned in late. If a student misses an exam, the grade for it will be 0 points. There will be no retro-grading after the final session/final exam. THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP FINAL EXAMS. Job related excuses and other conflicting schedules are not acceptable. Students are responsible for arranging their schedules around classes.

Students are expected to  a) interact with lecturers through the use of appropriate questions or discussion; and b) read all assignments before the session in which the material will be discussed. I realize that some students are more vocal than others; however, efforts to participate in class will be recognized and rewarded. (Sleeping, reading unrelated materials, web surfing, text messaging, etc… are insulting behaviors). No laptops/tablets will be allowed when we have a guest speaker.

*Blackboard Use*: It is the student’s responsibility to access the “blackboard” site for this course at least on a weekly basis. *Homework assignments* will be listed there: every week the students will have to visit one or more web sites related to the topic being discussed. A one page summary (double spaced) has to be turned in every week. Blackboard will also include advanced copies of the powerpoints presented in class. *Note* that the powerpoints will not be complete (sometimes missing a couple of words) so that students have to be in class and take notes. I will not be providing notes on incomplete powerpoints missed (you might need to get them from a fellow student).

*Incompletes* - University policy on "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. There are strict guidelines for incompletes and the student is responsible for understanding the requirements.

B. Case Study & Learning Activities: Due February 24\textsuperscript{th}.

In order to stimulate critical thinking and to understand the many challenges inherent in providing services, each student will choose a chapter of the textbook. You have to respond in detail to every single question and complete all the activities listed at the end of the chosen
chapter (Case Study plus Learning Activities). A typed (double spaced) 6+ page report will be submitted (1 inch margins; times-new roman, 12 point). Briefly enter the # and question, then respond...move on to the next. Do not give one-liner answers: document, rationalize and always address the “why” you are stating something. Papers will be graded based on completeness and in-depth review of issues and the answers to the questions. Creativity will also be rewarded and evaluated: for “learning /special activities” one should show resourcefulness.

In order to avoid duplication, each student should list their choice on Blackboard, under Discussion Board (Chapter #, Title), “first come first served.” No more than two students can pick the same chapter.

C. **Research Paper.** Due April 27\(^{th}\). Late papers not accepted.

**Topic Selection:** Each student will select a topic (service or issue) relevant to the aging network (different from the “case study” done previously). The themes should be specific rather than general (ex. “home equity conversions” or “shared housing” rather than housing programs; “challenges to recruit older volunteers” rather than senior volunteer programs).

In addition to “direct services,” other components of the aging network could be investigated as they relate to improving the network of services for older persons. Examples of additional areas to research could be: role of state and federal agencies; national and advocacy organizations; role of religious organizations; role of the business community; business and marketing issues in the delivery of social services; integration of services, partnerships; internet aging service organizations. (Intergenerational Services is not an option).

Topics chosen should be listed on Blackboard under Discussion Board (Title or Subject). No duplications. Please be specific so other students have more options.

**Requirements for the research paper:** Each paper will be printed, between 6 – 8 pages (times new roman, 12 point font; 1 inch margins, double spaced) not counting cover, table of contents, references and appendices. Tables, graphs, pictures, supplementary documentation, etc. go in the appendix. You need a minimum of 5 scholarly sources (research based books and journal articles, not older than 2004) –no quotes from the textbook!- in addition to any web-based information that you find, daily publications and magazines, etc.

The paper cannot include a repetition of what the service is, as explained in the textbook or powerpoints. Rather, you should use library research, census data, other textbooks, agency information, the internet, etc. In addition to an Introduction and a Conclusion/ Summary, the paper should: a) highlight current needs, problems (backed by facts and figures); b) current services and its availability; c) identify gaps in service delivery systems; d) identify barriers and access issues (including funding); and e) offer recommendations for improving services and for the future.

The paper should be divided into logically connected sections with headings for each one (include a Table of Contents that includes the sections -like a mini-outline). Paper should show evidence of research and an understanding of the issues. Creativity of thought process and understanding of the issues is what should be reflected in the paper (comparing articles and authors, and staying away from personal and undocumented opinions). A mere description of the service and a compilation of quotes doesn’t do it. A rubric as well as a sample outline will be made available.
Plagiarism and not “referencing” properly is unacceptable and has severe academic consequences. “Plagiarism is the act of using someone else’s words, sentences, or ideas and passing them off as your own without giving credit by citing the original source. It includes piecing together phrases, ideas, and sentences from a variety of sources to write an essay; also, submitting your paper in more than one course.”
I assume that every student has taken the plagiarism quiz at http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm?p=graphic

D. Tests
There will be two tests: a mid-term (March 9) and a final (May 11). Both will include a combination of true/false and multiple choice questions dealing with the issues from the readings, lectures and class presentations and discussions (this includes guest speakers and videos).

E. Grading - The standard university grading scale will be used. (A = 95 to 100; A- 90 to 94.99; B+ 86.66 to 89.99 and so forth (no “rounding up” to the highest grade!).

Proportions of the final grade.

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<tr>
<td>Case Study/ Activities</td>
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<td>Research paper</td>
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<td>Test #1</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE AND TOPICS

Jan. 20: Course Overview. Introduction
Jan. 27: Chapter 1 & 2: New Era Demographics. Legislative Foundations
Feb. 3: Chapters 3 & 4: Patterns of Services & Information & Referral
Feb. 10: Chapter 5: Volunteer and Intergenerational Programs
Feb. 17: Chapters 6 & 7: Senior Centers and Educational Programs
Feb. 24: Chapters 8 & 9: Employment and Income Programs
(Case Study/ Site Visit Paper Due)
March 2: Chapter 10: Nutrition and Meals Programs
March 9: Mid-Term Test
March 16: Chapter 11: Health Care & Wellness
March 23: Chapter 12: Mental Health Services
April 6: Chapter 13: Legal Services
April 13: Chapter 14 & 15: Transportation and Housing
April 20: Chapters 16 & 17: Care Management & Home Care.
April 27: Chapter 18: Respite Care & Caregiving. (Paper Due)
May 4: Chapter 19: Long-term Care Services
May 11: Final Exam

Special Note for Students with Disabilities:
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. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.