

## **Gerontology**

### **Course Description:**

**BS 126.** Gerontology. 3 hours credit. This course will examine the process of aging. The various interrelationships among social, psychological, biological, and economic factors which influence the individual planning and progress for the aging will be considered.

### **Text for Online and Telecourse:**

Nancy R. Hooyman & H. Asuman Kiyak, (2002). *Social Gerontology: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Allyn & Bacon Publishers.

### **Study Guide: (Optional for telecourse and on-line course)**

Braun, Kathryn L. (2002). *Growing Old in a New Age*. (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Allyn & Bacon Publishers.

### **Videos:**

*Growing Old in a New Age*, 13 - 1 hour lessons.

### **Online Resources:**

See the following online site, which supplements your textbook:  
<http://www.growingold.hawaii.edu/>

### **Course Goals:**

To provide the student with a foundation for understanding the processes of aging and old age as a stage of life. To help the student understand the impact of aging on society.

### **Course Objectives:**

At the successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain and discuss myths and realities of aging
  - a. Explain how and why attitudes toward older people have changed over time
  - b. Discuss the impact of the changing age structure of society
  - c. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of longitudinal and cross-sectional methods of studying aging
  - d. Describe and “debunk” five common myths about aging and older adults.
2. Describe and discuss how the body ages

- a. Describe how the biological changes that occur with aging affect appearance, strength, stamina, and resistance to disease
  - b. Discuss environmental and programmed theories of biological aging
  - c. Describe two directions for future research in the biology of aging.
3. Explain and describe how to maximize physical potential of older adults
  - a. Explain the value of physical fitness and good nutrition over the life span
  - b. Describe changes that occur with aging in vision, hearing, and sleep patterns
  - c. Give three examples that illustrate the concept of person-environment interaction in aging
  - d. Describe how gender and ethnicity affect health status in later life.
4. Explain and describe love, intimacy, and sexuality in aging
  - a. Explain how common social beliefs and attitudes may affect the opportunity for sexual expression among older adults
  - b. Describe the changes that take place in sexual functioning as males and females age
  - c. Describe three avenues for affection and intimacy for older adults without spouses.
5. Describe learning, memory, and speed of behavior in the older adult
  - a. Give three examples that illustrate the concept of person-environment fit in an older adult's ability to learn
  - b. Describe strategies used by older adults for storage and retrieval of information in long-term memory
  - c. Describe how age changes in speed of behavior can affect physical, perceptual, and cognitive skills of older adults.
6. Discuss and describe Intellect, personality, and mental health in the older adult
  - a. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of longitudinal and cross-sectional designs in the study of adult intellectual development
  - b. Describe the major findings from research on personality development over the life span
  - c. Identify three factors that promote or help maintain good mental health for older adults.
7. Explain and discuss social roles and relationships in old age
  - a. Give an example of each of the following in old age: role continuity, role development, role loss, and role gain
  - b. Discuss three social theories of aging: activity theory, disengagement theory, and continuity theory
  - c. Explain why and how role options are expanding for today's older adults.
8. Discuss family and intergenerational relationships
  - a. Describe how family roles can evolve in old age

- b. Give five examples of intergenerational exchange
  - c. Explain how community services can help build social supports for older adults
  - d. Discuss similarities among ethnic and cultural groups in marital, parental, and caregiving roles.
9. Explain and describe work, retirement, and economic status as we age
- a. Identify important aspects of successful employment and successful retirement in old age
  - b. Explain the reasons for the poverty found among older minorities and women
  - c. Describe three factors that may change the work patterns of elders in the future.
10. Identify and discuss illness and disability as it relates to aging
- a. Identify the major physical and mental health problems of older people in the United States today
  - b. Discuss the theory and reality of the “continuum of care” for chronically ill or disabled older adults
  - c. Discuss how gender and ethnicity affect use of health services.
11. Discuss dying, death, and bereavement
- a. Discuss reactions and coping mechanisms in older adults experiencing bereavement
  - b. Describe two services designed to help older adults cope with dying, death, and bereavement
  - c. Describe two tools people can use to plan for their own deaths
  - d. Discuss two ethical dilemmas posed by our technological ability to keep alive increasing number of older people.
12. Explain societal and political aspects of aging
- a. Discuss factors that affect elders’ participation and success in the political process
  - b. Describe four major social programs developed to meet the needs of older adults in the United States
  - c. Explain why long-term care presents a major policy issue for the United States.
13. Describe the future of aging
- a. Describe how demographic, health, sociological, and technological changes will impact families and society in the future
  - b. Describe how older people and younger people can join together to create the best possible future.

**Topical Outline of Units:**

- I. Myths and realities of Aging
  - a. Examine common myths
  - b. Rapid elderly population growth

- c. Impact of elderly growth.
- II. How the Body Ages
  - a. Biological Changes
  - b. Theories and Research
- III. Maximizing Physical Potential of Older Adults
  - a. Optimizing one's physical potential
  - b. Compensating for effects of aging
  - c. Lifestyle choices
- IV. Love, Intimacy, and Sexuality
  - a. Sources of love and affection in old age
  - b. Aging affects sexual and reproductive functioning
  - c. Continuing need for companionship, intimacy, love and sex in old age
- V. Learning, Memory, and Speed Behavior
  - a. Explore what happens to mental capacity as we age
  - b. Techniques to maintain and augment mental functioning
  - c. Elder explain why lifelong learning is crucial
- VI. Intellect, Personality and Mental Health
  - a. Intellectual function and the nature of personality are examined.
  - b. Longitudinal and cross-sectional research designs discussed
  - c. Elder discuss mental health and stress-reduction techniques.
- VII. Social Roles and Relationships in Old Age
  - a. Family, friendship, work and leisure roles evolve as we age.
  - b. Elders discuss coping with role loss
  - c. Pioneering of new roles is explored.
- VIII. Family and Intergenerational Relationships
  - a. How elder help sustain family traditions and culture.
  - b. Older adults describe the satisfaction and stress of caring for spouses and frail parents.
- IX. Work, Retirement, and Economic Status
  - a. Explored are labor force trends, retirement planning, and new job opportunities for older workers
  - b. Community service and leisure activities for retirees
  - c. Concerns about financial security in retirement
  - d. Social Security and other income sources are discussed

X. Illness and Disability

- a. Examine chronic health problems and availability of supportive services
- b. Elders coping with physical and mental illness
- c. Tough decisions regarding institutionalization and costs of long-term care

XI. Dying, Death, and Bereavement

- a. Services older people need to deal with dying and death
- b. Elders describe their views on widowhood and management of grief
- c. Experts examine the ethical dilemmas posed by terminal illness

XII. Societal and Political Aspects of Aging

- a. Reviews are roles older adults play in the political process, major social and health programs affecting older Americans, and the policy issues surrounding long-term care.

XIII. The Future of Aging

- a. Explore how demographic, health, and technological changes will impact families and society in the future
- b. Suggestions on how intergenerational coalitions can help us build a better future for people of all ages.

**Methods of Instruction:**

The following teaching and learning activities will assist students to achieve course objectives: lecture, instructor-led class discussions, case studies, student presentations, field trips, group work, guest speakers, professional journals, and textbook reading assignments.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Methods of evaluation may include the following: tests (both subjective and objective), daily work, homework assignments, attendance and class participation, and other methods of evaluation as determined by the instructor.

**ONLINE COURSE**

**Method of Instruction:**

The following online teaching/learning activities will assist students to achieve course objectives: posted web pages, threaded discussions, written assignments, assigned readings, professional journals, and interaction with instructor through e-mail and discussion boards. Independent study of audio/video materials augmented by text and ; collaboration and participation with class members and faculty via available means. Faculty role is facilitator of learning experiences.

**Method of Evaluation:**

Grade determination will be dependent upon tests, papers, class participation, posted entries, and other methods of evaluation as determined by the instructor.

## **TELECOURSE**

### **Method of instruction:**

The following activities will assist students to achieve course objectives: independent study of audio and video materials augmented by text and study guide, use of professional journals; collaboration and participation with class members and faculty via available means. Faculty role is facilitator of learning experiences.

### **Method of Evaluation:**

Grade determination will be dependent upon tests, papers, participation, and other methods of evaluation as determined by the instructor.