



Program Description

The Gerontology Program provides an applied interdisciplinary approach to studying the human aging process and the challenges encountered by older adults and their families as they interact in contemporary society. The curriculum is anchored in life course and humanistic theory, and concentrates on the needs of both healthy and chronically ill elders.

In order to better understand life's complexities, the program guides students to critically examine and explore the issues, impacts, and interventions for elders and their families from an interdisciplinary framework. Throughout course work, students are exposed to the bio-psycho-social-cultural and gender contexts that exist individually and in aggregate groups within society. Course content challenges all students to identify and analyze existing generalizations, theories, and concepts about aging in order to develop valid understandings based on current research in the discipline. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to actively advocate concerning elder issues.

The program offers a major and minor in Gerontology. Students are encouraged to blend other disciplines of study with Gerontology in order to facilitate varied career

alternatives. They are helped in constructing an individual (elective) program of study within their major that reflects their own interests. Using elective courses to begin to build a minor in this area is highly encouraged. The program also assists students in constructing a special master's degree. Currently the gerontology graduate courses needed for this are housed in the College of Continuing Education (CCE).

Career opportunities for gerontologists are growing rapidly. Employers are realizing the benefits of employing people who have backgrounds in aging along with abilities to address the needs of their older consumers. Gerontology graduates enter careers in both the public and private sectors with healthy and chronically ill elders. The careers are as varied as the goals of the individual and the needs of the organization. Graduates often work in such positions as counselors, advocates, analysts in state agencies for older adults, social workers, nurses, and information and referral specialists. Others have created their own careers in such areas as dental hygiene, human services, food services, travel, and web design.

Gerontology graduates also often go on to graduate and professional schools in fields such as sociology, psychology, counseling, nursing, criminal justice, family services, and social work.

Career Possibilities

Counselor • Adult Protective Services • Assessment/Intake Case Worker • California Department of Aging • Case Manager • Consultant • Department of Health Services • Department of Social Services-Older Adult Educator • Guardian/Conservator Staff • Information and Referral Specialist • Legal Aid Assistant • Ombudsman/Advocate • Program Activities Director • Program Specialist • Senior Community Outreach • Geriatric Social Worker • Geriatric Clinical Nurse • Rehabilitation/Job Training Agencies • Senior Retirement/Adult Day Care Centers • Area Agencies on Aging

Faculty

Sam Rios, *Ethnic Studies*; Jan Andersen, *Family Consumer Sciences*; Jennifer Park, Jennifer Piatt, Melinda Seid, Patricia Woodward, *Kinesiology and Health Science*; Tanya Altman, *Nursing*; Cheryl Osborne, *Gerontology and Nursing*; John Strother, *Social Work*; Qiaoming Amy Liu, Randall MacIntosh, *Sociology*

Contact Information

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Specializations

BS: Applied Service and Administration / General Focus

Special Features

The focus of the curriculum is upon the biological/psychological/social aspects of aging; social policies; services and research in aging; and practice, administration, and program skills related to aging.

- An integrated interdisciplinary program of courses and field experiences leads to a Bachelor of Science degree with a Major or Minor in Gerontology.
- Multiple major courses include integrated Service Learning to connect theory, practice and community service.
- Individuals are prepared for careers in varied gerontological practice areas based upon demographic projections of need for personnel in planning, administering, coordinating and delivering older adult services.
- Gerontological practitioners' awareness of the effects of social policy on aging individuals and families is heightened.

- The program helps facilitate students' progression from community colleges to the University when acquiring a BS degree in Gerontology.
- Individuals currently working in the community are afforded opportunities to learn advanced skills and acquire professional training in gerontology.
- The strong relationships between the Gerontology Program and Sacramento area agencies and institutions planning or delivering services for older persons are key components to this program's success.
- The Gerontology Program helps enhance the interest and commitment of diverse faculty and the University while providing a vehicle for interdisciplinary study and research in the field of Gerontology.
- The Program provides comprehensive academic preparation for graduate study in Gerontology or other related fields.

Undergraduate Programs

Requirements • Bachelor of Science Degree

Units required for Major: 48

Minimum total units required for BS: 120

Minimum grade required: "C" or better in all major and multidisciplinary core/elective courses.

Courses in parentheses are prerequisites.

A. Required Core Courses (18 units)

- (3) GERO 101 Elder Care Continuum Services and Strategies
- (3) GERO 102 Social Policy for an Aging Society
- (3) GERO 103 Applied Care Management in Gerontology Practice
- (3) GERO 195A Field Experience (GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103 and instructor permission)
- (3) GERO 195B Field Experience (GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103 and/or instructor permission)
- (3) Research Elective (see advisor)

Select 3 units from the following:

- NURS 150* Research in Nursing (NURS 136, NURS 137, NURS 138, NURS 139, or instructor permission. May be taken concurrently with either NURS 143, NURS 144, or NURS 155, NURS 156) **AND**
- NURS 195 Field Study (Instructor permission) **OR**
- SOC 102A Research Methods in Sociology (SOC 101 or equivalent) **OR**
- SWRK 111* Research Methods and Program Evaluation (SWRK 110. Corequisite: SWRK 140B or SWRK 140C)

*Gerontology students only need permission of the instructor and senior status.

B. Required Interdisciplinary Core (21 units)

- (3) BIO 120 Biology of Aging (BIO 001, BIO 002, BIO 010 or BIO 020)
- (3) ETHN 133 Crosscultural Aging in America
- (3) FACS 147 Financial and Legal Aspects of Aging (FACS 141 or instructor permission)
- (3) NURS 163 Holistic Approach to Aging (passing score on WPE)
- (3) PSYC 151 Psychological Aspects of Death and Dying

- (3) RLS 124 Therapeutic Recreation and Gerontology
- (3) SWRK 151 Health Services and Systems

C. Electives (9 units)

- (9) Select 9 units from the following; not more than 6 units in any one of the following areas:

Applied Service/Administration

- EDC 296R Counseling the Older Adult
- GERO 199 Special Problems
- HLSC 116 Public Health Administration and Policy
- HROB 101 The Management of Contemporary Organizations
- KINS 136 Sport and Aging

General Focus

- FACS 119 Nutrition and Aging (FACS 010, FACS 159 or instructor permission)
- FACS 159 Adulthood and Aging in Human Development (A human development course or instructor permission)
- HLSC 150 Aging and Health
- PSYC 150 Psychological Aspects of Aging (PSYC 001 or PSYC 005)
- SOC 102B Research Methods Laboratory (SOC 101 or equivalent; SOC 102A)

Notes:

- Additional optional courses which are recommended to support the Gerontology major are GERO 021, GERO 100, BIO 020, CHDV 030, FACS 050, FACS 141, NURS 010, PSYC 005, SOC 001, STAT 001.
- Major Core courses have the potential of offering a one unit Service Learning option for each of the three theory courses. These units could be combined and serve as one elective (GERO 199) if there is an approved written plan by the student and academic advisor.

Requirements • Minor

Units required for Minor: 21

Minimum grade required: "C" or better in all Gerontology Minor courses.

A. Required Lower Division Courses

There are no specific lower division course requirements. Students must complete at least 45 units of college or university work before becoming eligible to enroll in the program. Students are also encouraged to meet with the Program Director for advising prior to enrolling in any gerontology classes.

B. Required Upper Division Courses (21 units)

- (3) GERO 100 Aging Issues in Contemporary America
- (3) GERO 101 Elder Care Continuum Services and Strategies
- (3) GERO 102 Social Policy for an Aging Society
- (3) GERO 103 Applied Care Management in Gerontology Practice
- (3) GERO 195B Field Experience (GERO 101, GERO 102, and GERO 103 and instructor permission)
- (3) ETHN 133 Crosscultural Aging in America or other multicultural aging course
- (3) FACS 159 Adulthood and Aging in Human Development (a human development course or instructor permission) **OR**
- NURS 163 Holistic Approach to Aging (passing score on WPE)

Lower Division Course

GERO 021. Freshman Seminar: Becoming an Educated Person.

Introduction to the nature and possible meanings of higher education, and the functions and resources of the University. Designed to help students develop and exercise fundamental academic success strategies and to improve their basic learning skills. Provide students with the opportunity to interact with fellow students and the seminar leader and to build a community of academic and personal support, as well as explore gerontological concepts needed to respond to demographic changes in today's world. 3 units.

Upper Division Courses

GERO 100. Aging Issues in Contemporary America. Introduction to the field of Gerontology and how the discipline addresses society's aging needs. An examination of current issues in gerontology using a life span perspective focusing on older adults' needs/concerns along life's continuum in various environments. Major topics include implications of the demographic imperative, common aging changes/conditions, myths and stereotypes, effects of health/illness on individual and family roles, basic social issues and policies arising from the graying of America, and media, cultural and gender influences. 3 units.

GERO 101. Elder Care Continuum Services and Strategies.

Exploration and analysis of the "elder care service continuum" within the context of changing diverse societal needs, service availability and accessibility, current public policy, and administrative and management issues facing care providers. A multidisciplinary examination of the spectrum of services and programs targeted for older adults and their families. Includes information and referral processes and agencies, recreational and social options, housing alternatives, in-home, residential and skilled care options, health care eligibility criteria, funding sources, and adult protective services. **Note:** This is a service learning course. 3 units.

GERO 102. Social Policy for an Aging Society. Exploration of significant public policies related to aging, including Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans' Act, from both historic and current perspectives. Included is an examination of macroeconomics of aging, implications for women and persons of color, the rights of older adults, advocacy, the legislative process, policy analysis, and the politics and the ethics of aging. 3 units.

GERO 103. Applied Care Management in Gerontology

Practice. Analysis of issues, services, methods, and interventions related to "practice" with older adults and application of strategies for identifying and accessing services targeted for older adults and their families. Outcomes include understanding: unique characteristics/needs of elders; relationship of the systems approach to working with elders; issues affecting service delivery to this population (diversity, gender, ethics, special health and mental health needs); basic practice skills for effective service delivery to elders and families/caregivers; student's attitudes and roles when working with this population. **Note:** This is a service learning course. 3 units.

GERO 195A. Field Experience. Supervised internship experience in a community agency planning for or delivering professional services to older adults. This internship experience is part of two culminating courses for the major and focuses on application of the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline while affording students direct, hands on experiences. Includes a field seminar. Seminar discussions focus on the application of gerontological concepts derived from all gerontology courses and are applied to each student's specific Internship area. **Note:** This is a service learning course. **Prerequisite:** GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103 and instructor permission. Graded Credit/No Credit. 3 units.

GERO 195B. Field Experience. Supervised internship experience in a community agency planning for or delivering professional services to older adults. This second internship experience builds on the first internship course and is the final culminating course for the major and focuses on application of the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline while affording students direct, hands on experiences. Includes a field seminar. Seminar discussions focus on the application of gerontological concepts derived from all gerontology courses and are applied to each student's specific Internship area. **Note:** This is a service learning course. **Prerequisite:** GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103 and instructor permission. Graded Credit/No Credit. 3 units.

GERO 199. Special Problems. Independent research, project, or directed reading. **Note:** Open to students who are capable of independent work. A maximum of 3 units may count toward elective major requirements. **Prerequisite:** Advanced approval of project goal and objectives by program director. 1-3 units.