Courses

GERON 2003 Careers in Health and Medicine: 1 semester hour
Same as ANTHRO 2003, INTDSC 2003, SOC 2003. In this course, students will learn about occupations in such fields as medicine, the allied health professions, health non-profit organizations, and global healthcare delivery. Students will understand the education and skills necessary for various careers and for application to medical, professional, and graduate schools, and will become familiar with majors, certificates and minors that are available at UMSL. They will learn about employment opportunities in the healthcare industry in the St. Louis metropolitan area, and will be introduced to members of the local community who give guest lectures. Students will gain practical experience by shadowing a healthcare professional in their job.

GERON 2170 Aging in America: Concepts & Controversies: 3 semester hours
Same As SOC 2170. This course examines the major theoretical and service issues connected to the study of older adults and their families, using multidisciplinary perspectives. Students are provided with an introduction to the field of aging through an examination of current social issues and controversies. This course emphasizes student involvement through class discussion and applied activities, and is appropriate for students in the arts and sciences, business, communication, education, and nursing.

GERON 2220 Special Topics in Gerontology: 3 semester hours
Selected topics dealing with various aspects of gerontology. The specific contents of this course will vary from semester to semester. The course may be repeated with permission from the Gerontology director.

GERON 2256 Bioethics: 3 semester hours
Same as PHIL 2256. An examination of ethical issues in health care practice and clinical research and in public policies affecting health care. Topics include: abortion, euthanasia, health care, experimentation, informed consent and the right to health care.

GERON 2300 Social & Community Services for an Aging Population: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC 2300. This service-learning course is designed for students interested in working with and for the benefit of older adults in various settings. Students attend classes on campus and participate in defined volunteer placements with local agencies (e.g., St. Louis County Older Residents Program). The course introduces the range of social and community services available to seniors and their families today, while also exploring trends and technologies for the future. Public, for-profit and not-for-profit service models are examined, including common organizational, management, and staffing approaches. The important roles of volunteers-including peer to peer supports—are discussed. Attention is also given to how limited resources are allocated and the importance of program evaluation to ensure service quality and efficacy.

GERON 3212 Medical Anthropology: 3 semester hours
Same as ANTHRO 3212 and SOC 3212. Prerequisites: ANTHRO 1011 or GERON 2170 or PSYCH 1003 or SOC 1010 or consent of instructor or program director. An examination of the growing interaction between anthropology and medicine, and the increasing use of anthropologists in medical and health-care settings. In addition to teaching current theory in medical anthropology, the course focuses on anthropologically-based skills essential to those working in health-related fields.

GERON 3215 Aging, Culture & Globalization: 3 semester hours
Same as ANTHRO 3215 and SOC 3215. Prerequisites: ANTHRO 1011 or GERON 2170 or PSYCH 1003 or SOC 1010 or consent of instructor or program director. This course examines the wide-ranging variability in the roles of older people across different cultures and the effects these have on older people, their families, and their societies.

GERON 3280 Psychology of Death and Dying: 3 semester hours
Same as PSYCH 3280. Prerequisite: PSYCH 1003 or consent of the instructor. An exploration of end-of-life issues integrating the scholarly, social, and individual dimensions of death and dying. This course provides a solid grounding in theory and research, as well as practical application to students' lives.

GERON 4130 Interviewing Older Adults and Life Review: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC 4130. Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course combines training in interviewing techniques with video editing/ production. Students will learn how to conduct life review interviews with older adults, and then take these skills into the community by interviewing older adults living in various settings. Students will learn how to use a digital video camera and edit video clips on the computer. Student-conducted interviews will be viewed by the instructor and classmates, issues associated with aging will be discussed, and constructive feedback provided. Some of the video clips developed in the course will become part of an educational video clip library.

GERON 4200 Gerontological Practice with Aging Veterans: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. Aging veterans often demonstrate different social, health and psychological support needs. This practice-oriented course reviews and frames gerontological interventions for different veteran subpopulations, including those residing at home, in senior housing, and under Veterans Administration (VA) care. The impacts of age cohort, gender, service during war or peacetime, post-traumatic stress status, substance abuse and addiction, military culture, and pension and service-connected compensation are studied. Special opportunities and challenges for social service providers in the VA health system are also reviewed.

GERON 4320 Gender, Sexuality & Aging: 3 semester hours
Same as GS 4320. Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course examines advancing age through a gender lens. Men and women experience aging differently based on a host of genetic, biological, psychological, sociocultural and personal identity factors. This course challenges students to consider aging from various perspectives, including cultural expectations and norms, couple and family relationships, health and function, work life and retirement, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, concerns of LGBT elders, and veterans’ issues.

GERON 4361 Social Gerontology: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC 4361. Prerequisites: SOC 1010 and junior standing or consent of instructor. Topics include sociological theories of aging, technological and social change and its effects on the environment of older people, and prejudice and discrimination against the elderly.
GERON 4376 Mental Health and Aging: 3 semester hours
Same as PSYCH 4376 and SOC WK 4376. Prerequisites: 9 hours of psychology, graduate standing, or consent of instructor or program director. This course provides a survey of theory and research in mental health issues for older populations, focusing on psychological and social aspects of mental health and impairment. The course details approaches to understanding prevalence, etiology, assessment, and treatment of the psychological disorders most commonly experienced by older adults, including anxiety, depression, delirium, and dementia, among others.

GERON 4430 Ethnicity, Dementia and Caregiving: 3 semester hours
Same as GS 4430. Prerequisites: Geron or Soc 2170 or 3000 level Geron, Soc, Psych or Anthro course or consent of instructor. An examination of the caregiving experience with respect to progressive dementia (e.g., Alzheimer’s disease) and related socio-cultural influences. Special focus on the importance of cultural competence in the provision of health and social services to dementia patients and family caregivers from diverse national and ethnic backgrounds.

GERON 4445 Aging, Chronic Illness & Disability: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course will examine the consequences of chronic illness and disability in aging for individual well-being, social roles, family dynamics, and the functioning of society. Chronic illness and disability are presented as medical concerns that have psychosocial and functional impacts for both individuals with these conditions and their caregivers. These impacts are shaped by the changing age structure of society. This course also reviews typologies of chronic illness and relevant state and federal policies intended to support both adults with chronic illness and disability and caregivers. Although the main focus of the course is on aging in the US, population aging is a worldwide phenomenon and global comparisons will be included.

GERON 4490 Directed Readings: 1-3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor. Directed reading and research or field work. May be repeated for a maximum of three hours.

GERON 4500 Physiology & Pharmacology of Aging: 3 semester hours
Same as PSYCH 4500. Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or consent of the instructor or program director. This course examines functional health in advancing age and the impacts of common disease processes on the aging body. Symptom presentations, diagnostic considerations, treatment and management issues are discussed. A special emphasis is placed on pharmacology, especially how the aging body responds to different medication types, risks for drug-drug interactions, and challenges associated with polypharmacy. The course emphasizes a “whole person” approach to health and well-being, and targets the learning needs of those wishing to work with older adults in health, social, and community service settings.

GERON 4520 The Aging Body: 3 semester hours
Same as GS 4520. Prerequisites: Geron or Soc 2170 or 2000 level or higher Geron, Soc, Psych, Soc Wk, or Nurse course or consent of instructor. This course focuses on the aging body with respect to health and function. Physiologic and cognitive concerns of older men and women are reviewed. Contextual factors (e.g., relationships, socio-cultural, spiritual, environmental) and issues in service delivery are also addressed.

GERON 4620 Dying, Grief & Death in Older Adulthood: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course examines trajectories to death in older age, the dying process, influences of medical and aging-related conditions, euthanasia and suicide, life extension and longevity, personal beliefs and existential responses, how individuals and families cope, ethical concerns, and strategies for supportive intervention. Topics are addressed from clinical, supportive care, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Ideal for those planning to work with older adults in counseling, health care, hospice, and/or community support settings.

GERON 4680 Introduction to Gerontological Practice: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC WK 4680. Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course introduces key concepts and practices in the evaluation and care of older adults. It is intended for students considering aging-focused careers in the social service or healthcare fields. Topics include developmental and health-related theories of aging, functional and psychosocial aspects of aging, working with older adults in various service settings, multi and interdisciplinary team approaches, and basic standards of professional conduct that apply across professions.

GERON 4700 Successful Aging: Individual & Societal Perspectives: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course addresses key components of successful aging, including avoidance of disease, maintenance of good mental and physical function, and sustained engagement in life. Students become familiar with the different intra- and extra-personal determinants of successful aging and learn to distinguish between the concepts of successful and productive aging. Also discussed is the impact of societal, economic and political context on success in aging (e.g. health care delivery, entitlement programs, technology, globalization, volunteerism, and culture).

GERON 4720 Ageless Arts: Creativity in Later Life: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC 4720. Prerequisites: Junior/senior undergraduate or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor or program director. This course examines how the lives of older adults are enriched through engagement in artistic, creative activities. Key approaches to creative aging are explored, with emphasis on benefits to physical health, emotional well-being, and interpersonal connection. Influencing factors are examined, including ageism, generativity, family and personal networks, environmental resources, sensory and cognitive deficits, and other health and physical changes of aging. The works of historical and current artists - painters, novelists, filmmakers, playwrights, musicians and others - are surveyed with an emphasis on products from later in the life course. Finally, the therapeutic benefits of creativity are examined through evidence-based research and the personal narratives of successful senior artists.

GERON 5361 Advanced Social Gerontology: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Graduate Standing. An examination of sociological theories of aging, technological and social change and its effects on the environment of older people, and prejudice and discrimination against the elderly.

GERON 5376 Psychopathology and Aging: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Graduate Standing. Recent theory and research in mental health issues for older populations. The primary focus is on major psychological disorders prevalent among older adults and in assessment and treatment approaches for aging populations.
GERON 5420 Research Methods and Analysis I: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Admission to the MSG Program or graduate standing.
The first of a two-course sequence designed to provide students
with the knowledge base and skills for using the scientific method to
advance gerontological knowledge, theory and evidence-based practice.
Focuses on research methods employed in aging-related studies, with
a special emphasis on the critical evaluation of academic studies and the
evidentiary basis of key findings. Covers quantitative and qualitative
approaches, research design, sampling procedures, measurement, use of
results, impact of research, and ethical considerations.

GERON 5440 Sociocultural Aspects of Aging: 3 semester hours
Same as ANTHRO 5440. Prerequisites: Graduate status or consent of
the instructor or program director. Focuses on the variety of solutions
encountered in different sociocultural contexts for dealing with the
problems, challenges and opportunities of growing old. It is organized
around topics that are of concern to both anthropology and social
gerontology: the status of the aged, intergenerational relations, aging in
modernizing societies, ethnic dimensions of aging in complex societies,
health in later life, death and dying. Both in-depth case studies and cross-
cultural comparisons are examined in an effort to arrive at a culturally
informed assessment of factors affecting aging and the aged in the United
States.

GERON 5450 Research Methods and Analysis II: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: GERON 5420 or equivalent. An advanced course focused
on the framing and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to advance
gerontological knowledge, theory, and evidence-based practice. Students
learn to use and interpret various statistical procedures for analyzing
qualitative and quantitative data (including bivariate and multivariate
analyses). Students apply various analytic techniques using computer
software applications.

GERON 6120 Theory and Practice with Older Adults: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC WK 6120. Prerequisites: Graduate Standing. Examines
theory and empirically-based assessment and intervention models for work
with the elderly. It includes the life circumstances of older adults and how
that differs from younger adult populations; how ethnicity, gender,
social class, and sexual orientation interact with age and create special
intervention issues; discussion of ethical and value issues (e.g. client
autonomy, rationing of health care); examination of family and community
resources in providing care; and interventions with physically or mentally
disabled elders and elders in residential settings.

GERON 6441 Aging and Health Behavior: 3 semester hours
Same as PSYCH 6441. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. This course
examines sociocultural influences on health care practices of older adults.
The role of social support and other social resources in the health behavior
of older adults is emphasized. Topics include self care decisions, formal
service utilization, family caregiving, and planned interventions for older
adults.

GERON 6443 Health Care Policy: 3 semester hours
Same as P P ADM 6430, POL SCI 6443, and SOC WK 6443.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Survey course
examining current issues in health policy that face the nation. Policies are
placed in a historical context to show how issues have been influenced by
different political and economic conditions. Secondary consequences and
limitations of current trends in health policy are explored.

GERON 6444 Seminar in Public Policy and Aging: 3 semester hours
Same as P P ADM 6444, and POL SCI 6444. The study of specialized
issues and methods related to federal, state, and local policies that affect
the elderly. Potential policy areas to be covered include: housing, taxation,
mental health, transportation, etc. May be repeated for credit, provided the
subject matter is different.

GERON 6449 Issues In Retirement: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Graduate standing. This course examines macro and micro
issues of retirement in the United States—its processes, causes, and
consequences—in relation to economic market conditions, demographic
changes, and programs and policies that are targeted to support the
elderly (e.g., Social Security). It also examines issues relating to older
women and retirement.

GERON 6450 Gerontological Assessment: 3 semester hours
Same as SOC WK 6450. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. This course
provides an overview of psychosocial assessment with older adults and their
family caregivers. major areas of gerontological assessment practice
are considered, including dementia, mood disorders, suicide, grief,
alcoholism, elder abuse/neglect, family caregiving, and interdisciplinary
team issues.

GERON 6470 Epidemiology of Aging: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Graduate Standing. This course reviews the distribution and
determinants of health-related conditions and functional concerns in older
populations. An emphasis is placed on key concepts and methodological
considerations for conducting epidemiological studies. Students learn
about the epidemiology of selected diseases, syndromes and conditions
common to older age, including various trajectories of physical and
cognitive decline. Also discussed are the roles that epidemiological data
play in the development of interventions to control and prevent age-related
disease and inform public health decision-making and evidence-based
geriatric practice.

GERON 6490 Directed Study: 1-3 semester hours
Prerequisite: Consent of Instructor. Designed to give the student an
opportunity to pursue a more in-depth study of a problem area in
gerontology than is normally covered in more formal courses. May be
repeated for a total of six credit hours.

GERON 6495 Practicum in Gerontology: 3 semester hours
This course provides supervised work experience in an agency that serves
older adults. Students are required to complete a minimum of 150 clock
hours at the practicum site.

GERON 6496 Advanced Practicum in Gerontology: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: GERON 6495 and consent of instructor This course
provides advanced practicum experience beyond GERON 6495. Students
must complete a minimum of 150 clock hours of supervised field work
(service or research) with older adults.

GERON 6497 Interdisciplinary Geriatric Care: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Consent of Instructor. Same as VIS SCI 6497.
Interdisciplinary approaches that address the medical, social, instrumental
and functional needs of older adults will be examined. Information about
geriatric care management and social issues affecting the well-being
of older adults will be provided. Clinical, theoretical, and educational
perspectives will be presented.

GERON 6498 Advanced Seminar In Gerontology: 3 semester hours
Prerequisite: Graduate standing. This course will provide in-depth analysis
of specialized topics in gerontology which are not covered in required
courses. (Course may be repeated for a maximum of nine credits,
assuming topics are different.).
GERON 6500 Practicum in Gerontological Research: 3 semester hours
Prerequisites: GERON 6495 and consent of the instructor. A supervised social science research experience involving a combination of two or more of the following activities: literature review, hypothesis generation, study design and proposal, IRB application, participant recruitment, data collection, data management, data analysis, and report/article generation.

GERON 6510 Directed Research in Aging: 1-3 semester hours
Prerequisites: Consent of the instructor. Designed to give the student an opportunity to explore a question of interest from a qualitative and/or quantitative research perspective. This supervised experience may include one or more of the following activities (depending on enrolled hours): literature review, hypothesis generation, study design and proposal, IRB application, participant recruitment, data collection, data management, data analysis, and report/article generation.