

# Gerontology

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## Courses

### **GERON 2003 Careers in Health and Medicine: 1 semester hour**

Same as INTDSC 2003, ANTHRO 2003, SOC 2003, and PSYCH 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 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 3220 Selected Topics in Gerontology: 3 semester hours**

This course covers 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 coordinator.

### **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 3300 The Social Construction of Aging and Ageism: 3 semester hours**

Same as SOC 3300 and GS 3300. This course examines perspectives of age, aging, and ageism using several perspectives: the theory of social construction and the frameworks of essentialism and intersectionality. The materials, discussions, and assignments in this course will familiarize and provide students with tools to investigate age and ageism in a complex, multidimensional manner. The overarching focus of this course is located in the tension with the "nature versus nurture" debate, paralleling nature with essentialist ideas and nurture with social constructionism. Ideas, conceptions, attitudes, and understandings of age within the media, family, medical community, and other institutions will be investigated as biological and/or a development of society in effort to perpetuate social control, organization, and power dynamics. Through research, fiction and non-fiction work, creative assignments, and theoretical texts, students will approach the following questions: How do we value lived-experiences? How might situated knowledge affect social constructions of aging and ageism? What evidence is provided toward age and/or ageism as an essential or socially constructed outline within society? How are socially constructed ideas developed and perpetuated? How might one affect change in an essentialist and/or socially constructed society?.

### **GERON 3400 Environment, Society, and Aging: 3 semester hours**

Same as SOC 3400. This course examines the intersection of the environment and human society with an emphasis on aging. Drawing from research in environmental sociology, medical sociology, and gerontology, this course will address the following topics: climate change, natural disasters, community development, food production and distribution, waste and pollution, illness and disease epidemiology, and health and well-being.

### **GERON 4170 Aging in America: Life Course, Health Care and Socioeconomic Perspectives: 3 semester hours**

Prerequisites: Junior standing or consent of the instructor. This advanced course focuses on aging in North America from three primary perspectives: (1) the life course and trajectories of personal aging; (2) systems and policies associated with health care; and (3) socioeconomic aspects, including workforce issues and retirement. Human aging is relevant to most professional disciplines and areas of study; thus the course emphasizes a multidisciplinary understanding and encourages integrative thinking, discussion and writing.

### **GERON 4320 Gender, Sexuality and 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 4330 Advanced Topics in Gerontology: 3 semester hours**

The course covers 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 4361 Social Gerontology: 3 semester hours**

Same as SOC 4361. Prerequisites: Junior standing or consent of instructor. This course examines a variety of topics related to gerontology including 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. Prerequisites: PSYCH 2245 or consent of instructor. 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 functioning. The course details approaches to understanding healthy aging, along with the prevalence, etiology, assessment and treatment of psychological disorders in older adults. The course also provides an overview of health care and community-based delivery systems for behavioral health, and allows students to explore information about careers in aging.

**GERON 4400 Social & Community Services for an Aging Population: 3 semester hours**

Same as SOC 4400. Prerequisites: GERON 2170 / SOC 2170 or consent of the instructor. 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).

**GERON 4430 Ethnicity, Dementia and Caregiving: 3 semester hours**

Same as SOC 4430. Prerequisites: GERON 2170 or SOC 2170, or consent of instructor. This course examines the interaction between sociocultural factors and the experience of dementia, both for the person who has dementia and their family caregivers. Students will 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 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 2170 or SOC 2170 or another introductory course (2000 or higher) in Gerontology, Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, or Nursing; or consent of the 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 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 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 6120 Theory and Practice with Older Adults: 3 semester hours***

Same as SOC WK 6120. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. This course examines theory and empirically-based assessment and intervention models for work with older adults. Topics include the differences between life circumstances of older adults and younger adult populations; how ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation intersect 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; interventions with older adults with physical and mental disabilities; and older adults in residential settings.

***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 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 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.