GERONTOLOGY

College of Health and Social Sciences
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Gerontology Program
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Program Scope

Purpose
The Gerontology Program is administratively housed in the College of Health and Social Sciences (CHSS) and enjoys close collaborative relationships with other units throughout the college, University, and with the communities it serves. The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Gerontology is an applied, professional program designed for students preparing for a career in the field of aging, or a related human service field, who wish to improve their knowledge and skills. Coursework leading to the M.A. in Gerontology is designed to:

- emphasize the broad, interdisciplinary nature of issues which relate to and influence older adults;
- provide students with the academic background, professional experience, and research capabilities necessary to pursue advanced study at the doctoral level; and
- prepare students for professional practice and leadership positions in the public and private sectors where gerontological knowledge is required.

History and Philosophy
The Master of Arts in Gerontology program at SF State was established in 1986 and is the first, and thus the oldest, graduate program in Gerontology in the California State University and the University of California systems. The program is dedicated to the higher education of professionals using an interdisciplinary approach to serve the present and future needs of society in meeting the multiple challenges of an aging population; the conduct of applied research to increase the body of knowledge about issues and processes of aging; and the application of the discipline of gerontology in the community to advocate for improving the quality of care and quality of life for the aged.

The academic program adheres to the standards and guidelines established by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) for professional master’s level programs. In addition, the program faculty has advised student organizations such as student chapters of the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), Gerontological Society of America (GSA), and Sixty Plus (lifelong learning for students age 60 and over). The program provides a gerontology library and shared meeting place for student activities.

Applied, Skill-Based Professional Education
The Gerontology program emphasizes an applied, skill-based approach to professional education. To do this, it draws upon the strengths of the university and community as well as the expertise of the faculty.

The program resides in a richly diverse, multicultural environment which provides a natural laboratory for understanding and developing competencies around the aging experiences of different ethnic groups.

Students obtain knowledge of the discipline and its theoretical foundations. Students are prepared with tools which allow them to use quantitative and qualitative methods in applied research for examining issues pertinent to older adults.

Gerontology at SF State includes advocacy for the aged in the continuum of care and actively engages in activities through links with other professionals to provide a comprehensive model of consumer-driven health and human services. Students can participate in learning and service where skills of needs assessment, program development, implementation and evaluation directly contribute to the community’s well-being.

Career Outlook
Gerontology is one of the fastest growing disciplines within the field of Health and Human Services. Current demographic projections indicate that California will experience a doubling of the population over the age of 65 by the year 2020; furthermore, of all age groups, the group over age 85, the oldest old, is increasing at the greatest rate. Not only will there be greater numbers of older persons by 2020, they will be increasingly single, female, and ethnically diverse. A Master of Arts (M.A.) in Gerontology prepares the student for effective performance in a career of service to older adults. It also lays a firm academic foundation in applied gerontology for students who choose to work toward a doctoral degree. Students have the opportunity to choose a number of career paths in the field of aging within the public and private sectors.

For example, Geriatric Care Managers (GCMs) are hired by a variety of community-based agencies, private care management organizations and many GCMs are starting their own businesses. A GCM practice particularly lends itself to the entrepreneur who wishes to begin a small business to serve the community need. GCMs are certified and supported by the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers. This professional association provides an interactive website that links family members with certified care managers and offers high quality continuing education.

Gerontology can also be applied to programs of health promotion in both the private and public sectors. Senior centers, retirement communities, long-term institutions and professional organizations serving older persons now recognize the need for making wellness a priority in planning, programs and services. Health and wellness are also new priorities for school children and adults and students may explore career opportunities for intergenerational practice. Students choosing a Gerontology emphasis in health, wellness and aging are prepared for professional practice in local, state and federal government, the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors and organizations from AARP to the YMCA.

Long-term care administration (LTCA) is another major career opportunity for gerontologists in a period of expansion and diversification. Professional requirements vary widely depending on state and federal regulations for the specific area of administration. Long-term care administrators manage and direct the daily operations of long-term care facilities. Employment opportunities for long-term care administrators
are available and may be found in assisted living facilities, geriatric care centers, home health care agencies, hospice facilities, hospital systems, rehabilitation facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly, retirement communities, senior centers, skilled nursing facilities, and special population programs (AIDS and mental health). For further information on careers on aging, go to http://www.aghe.org/resources/careers-in-aging

**Professor**


ANABEL O. PELHAM (1977), *Professor of Gerontology*, B.A. (1971), Florida Technological University; M.A. (1975), San Francisco State University; Ph.D. (1980), University of California, San Francisco.


**Masters**

- Master of Arts in Gerontology (bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/health-social-sciences/gerontology/ma-gerontology)

**GRN 500 Gerontology: An Interdisciplinary Perspective (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Successful completion of GE Areas A1, A2, A3, and B4 or consent of the instructor.

Concepts and issues in gerontology; processes, problems, and challenges of aging as related to other disciplines, integrating and emphasizing research findings.

**Course Attributes:**

- E1: Lifelong Learning Develop
- UD-D: Social Sciences

**GRN 510 Death and Dying in Contemporary Society (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Successful completion of GE Areas A1, A2, A3, and B4 or consent of the instructor.

Attitudes, beliefs, practices, grief responses, and bioethical issues of dying and death which confront the individual and society. Ways to cope and help oneself and others to enhance life and maturity. 

(This course is offered as NURS 500 and GRN 510. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

**Course Attributes:**

- E1: Lifelong Learning Develop
- UD-D: Social Sciences

**GRN 520 Profession of Gerontology (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Academic exploration of gerontology; insights into where students might fit into the field; understanding traditional/non-traditional career paths; knowledge and skills sets required of service professionals for the aged.

**GRN 575 Applying Gerontology for our Aging Parents (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: GRN 500 or consent of instructor.

Issues of aging faced by families, communities, and our graying society.
GRN 760 Research Methods in Gerontology (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Introductory statistics and consent of instructor.
Quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods, data
gathering techniques, measurement and data analysis and interpretation.
Applications of research methods to studies in aging, including
descriptive and comparative research, program evaluations, and needs
assessments.

GRN 765 Aging and Continuum of Care (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.
Overview of continuum of care; emphasis on human diversity, quality of
care, and quality of life. Concepts, functions, issues, and skills associated
with home and community-based services, adult day care, assisted living,
nursing facilities, and hospice care.

GRN 820 Age and Social Relations (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.
Aging in a social context. Diversity and heterogeneity in later life social
interactions. Interweaving of growth and decline in the context of multiple
social relations.

GRN 838 Gerontology Seminar (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Enrollment in gerontology program or consent of instructor.
Group process in support of gerontology internship, learning contract
and qualitative methods; fieldwork experience and techniques; ethics and
problem-solving. May be repeated for a total of 6 units. (Plus-minus letter
grade; CR/NC allowed, RP)

GRN 839 Gerontology Internship (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.
Field internship in cooperation with a private/public profit or non-profit
organization enabling students to acquire competencies and experiences
required for professional responsibilities. May be repeated for a total of 6
units.

GRN 890 Integrative Seminar (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and approval of Advancement to
Candidacy (ATC) and Culminating Experience (CE) forms by Graduate
Studies.
Capstone to demonstrate knowledge and skills in problem-solving,
decision-making, critical thinking, and cooperative and collaborative
communications.

GRN 895 Field Study (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Consent of gerontology adviser and instructor; approval of
Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) and Culminating Experience (CE) forms
by Graduate Studies.
Field study or applied research resulting in completed written work that
as a minimum includes project’s significance, objectives, methodology,
conclusions/recommendations. Advancement to Candidacy and Proposal
for Culminating Experience Requirement forms must be approved by the
Graduate Division before registration. (CR/NC, RP grading only)

GRN 897 Gerontology Research (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Classified graduate status and consent of graduate
adviser. Independent/original research under faculty supervision.
Continuous enrollment required for all students yet to complete the
master's thesis or research project. May be repeated for a total of 9 units,
but cannot be used more than 3 units for degree credit. (Plus-minus letter
grade, CR/NC, RP)

GRN 898 Master's Thesis (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and graduate major adviser;
approval of Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) for the Master of Arts and
Culminating Experience (CE) forms by Graduate Studies.
An intensive, systematic study of a significant topic or problem in
gerontology. ATC and Proposal for Culminating Experience Requirement
forms must be approved by the Graduate Division before registration.
(CR/NC grading only)

GRN 899 Independent Study (Units: 3)
Pursuit of a topic under the supervision of a faculty adviser/instructor.
May be repeated for a total of 6 units.