College of Health and Social Sciences
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Gerontology Program
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Gerontology Program Coordinator: Darlene Yee-Melichar

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. Course work 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 active 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 solving a variety of practical problems in the community.

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 Americans. 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 among the most highly sought gerontological professionals in the United States. 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 web site that links family members with certified care managers and offers high quality continuing education.

Health, wellness and aging programs and services are examples of the frontiers of applied research and recent federal funding via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Programs of health promotion are currently being created and funded in both the private and public sectors and accumulating research describes a direct link between health and wellness and life style choices. 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 a career opportunity 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).

**Professors**
de Vries, Takagi, Yee-Melichar

**Lecturers**
Cabigao, Flores, Harris, McGinnis, Scott

**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: Upper division standing or consent of 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: Upper division standing or consent of 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 699 Independent Study (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Upper division standing or consent of instructor.

Pursuit of a topic of special gerontological interest while under the supervision of a faculty advisor/instructor.

**GRN 705 Aging in a Multidimensional Context (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Examination of theories and research on aging: interpersonal and structural dimensions of aging; scope, concepts, and approaches in the field.

**GRN 710 Aging Processes: Health and Human Services (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Examination of the biomedical and physiological processes and theories of aging. Implications on health and human services for the elderly of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities.

**GRN 715 Age and Social Policy Analysis (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Exploration of the variety of public and private agencies and businesses, including entitlement programs designed to serve an aging population. Examine a variety of models and frameworks for policy analysis, with attention to global aging issues.

**GRN 725 Aging and Diversity (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Multicultural aging issues; psychological aspects of aging for ethnic/racial groups within the U.S. Cultural competence, cohort variations, health differentials, life expectancy/longevity, theoretical perspectives, and methodological implications.

**GRN 735 Ethical and Legal Issues in Aging and Social Services (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Ethical dilemmas and legal issues as they pertain to the professional practice of gerontology and the delivery of social services to the elderly.

**GRN 740 Nursing Home Administration (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Comprehensive multidimensional study of regulations (finance, human resources, leadership, environmental, resident care, quality of life) for nursing home administrators. Emphasis on OBRA (federal regulations) and Title 22 (state regulations) in preparation for Nursing Home Administrator licensure examination. (Plus-minus letter grade only)

**GRN 745 Assisted Living Administration (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Extensive and thorough examination of regulations (business and financial, environmental, human resources, organizational, resident care management) for assisted living and residential care administrators. Emphasis on Title 22 (state regulations) in preparation for RCFE Administrator certification examination. (Plus-minus letter grade only)

**GRN 750 Home Care Management (Units: 3)**
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Design and delivery of home care services to the elderly in the community. Role of home health care professionals and their impact on services. Identification of techniques for providing home care services.

**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.

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.

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.