The 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 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 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 long-term care administration (LTCA) is another major career opportunity in 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 Aging and Society (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 and non-traditional career paths, and the knowledge and skill sets required of service professionals for the aged.

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

Issues of aging faced by families, communities, and our graying society.
GRN 760 Research Methods in Gerontology (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Introductory statistics; consent of the 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 the instructor.
Overview of the continuum of care with an 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 the 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: Gerontology students or consent of the instructor.
Group process in support of gerontology internship, learning contract, 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 the instructor.
Field internship in cooperation with a private or 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 the instructor; 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 a Gerontology adviser and instructor; approval of Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) and Culminating Experience (CE) forms by Graduate Studies prior to enrollment.
Field study or applied research resulting in completed written work that as a minimum includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, conclusions, and recommendations. (CR/NC, RP grading only)

GRN 897 Gerontology Research (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Classified graduate status; consent of a 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; only 3 units may count for degree credit. (Plus-minus letter grade, CR/NC, RP)

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