

GERONTOLOGY

College of Health and Social Sciences

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Gerontology Program

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Program Scope

Purpose

The Gerontology Program (GRN) is administratively housed in the School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) within the College of Health and Social Sciences (CHSS); it 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 and professional levels;
- prepare students for professional practice and leadership positions in the public and private sectors where gerontological knowledge is required;
- empower students with a vision of diversity, social justice, person-centered services, and global issues to promote intergenerational understanding;
- invest in students a working knowledge of theoretical foundations which link the micro and macro aspects of aging; and
- prepare students with tools to use quantitative and qualitative methods in applied research for solving a variety of practical problems in the community.

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 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 Academy 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 is increasing at the greatest rate. Not only will there be greater numbers of older persons by 2020, but they will also 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 or professional 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 and 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

Darlene Yee-Melichar (1990), *Professor in Gerontology*. Ed.D. Teachers College, Columbia University.

Assistant Professor

Emiko Takagi (2017), *Assistant Professor in Gerontology*. Ph.D. University of Southern California.

Masters

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

GRN 500 Aging and Society (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or permission 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 LLD Pre-Fall 2019
- UD-D: Social Sciences

GRN 510 Death and Dying in Contemporary Society (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or permission 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.

Course Attributes:

- E1 LLD Pre-Fall 2019
- UD-D: Social Sciences

GRN 699 Independent Study (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing or permission of the instructor.

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

GRN 705 Aging in a Multidimensional Context (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

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

GRN 710 Aging Processes: Health and Human Services (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of the 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 permission of the 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 permission of the instructor.

Multicultural aging issues including psychological aspects of aging for ethnic and racial groups within the U.S. Emphasis on 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 permission of the 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 760 Research Methods in Gerontology (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: Introductory statistics; permission 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 permission 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 838 Gerontology Seminar (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Gerontology students or permission 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 permission 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: Permission 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 897 Gerontology Research (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: Graduate standing; permission 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 899 Independent Study (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

Pursuit of a topic under the supervision of a faculty adviser/instructor. May be repeated for a total of 6 units.