

University of Northern Colorado
College of Natural and Health Sciences
School of Human Sciences – Gerontology Program

Introduction to Gerontology, Fall 2014

GERO 205 -101

Instructor: Joyce Weil, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00am-12:15pm

Location: Gunter 2530

Office: Gunter 1280

Office hours: Tues. 1:00-2:30pm & Wed. 4-5pm or by appt.

Phone: (970) 351-1583

E-mail: joyce.weil@unco.edu

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of gerontology and to the issues of aging and older adults. Students will gain an understanding of the physical, psychological, social, and environmental forces that may influence older individuals. Upon completion of this Liberal Arts core course, students will be able to:

1. Identify physical, psychological, cognitive and social changes that occur with age.
2. Identify social policies, historical trends, and demographic characteristics that affect older persons.
3. Identify services and programs for older adults at the federal, state, and local levels, and demonstrate an understanding of how to secure information from and about these resources.
4. Identify cultural, ethnic, and gender differences among aging populations.
5. Demonstrate critical and complex thinking about issues concerning older adults.
6. Effectively communicate knowledge of aging in writing.
7. Compare/contrast personal experiences of older adults with trends and findings in the field of gerontology.

Learning Activities:

As part of this course, you will be engaged in active learning and critical reflection. Through experiential learning, or learning both in the classroom and in the field, you will be able to apply theories and concepts learned in the course in a “real-world setting.”

This is a Community Engaged Learning course which means there will be travel to an off-campus site required as part of the course, as pre-planned and designated by your Instructor. This semester we are working exclusively with a continuing care community, Grace Pointe, 1919 68th Avenue, Greeley, CO, 80634. There are three service-learning activities that you must complete.

First, there will be one formal meeting of the entire class at Grace Pointe during class time for an orientation. Secondly, smaller groups (between 8-10 students assigned by the instructor), will visit Grace Pointe during class time on the one day/time assigned in the Syllabus for neighborhood walks with elders. Your Instructor, Graduate Assistant, and Activities Director for Grace Pointe will be there, as well. These specific dates and times are noted on the Syllabus. Group assignment will be done in the second week of class.

Third, each student will have an additional 10-hour volunteer commitment outside of class time at Grace Pointe. We have arranged a variety of options to choose from (such as social visiting, reading to residents, playing a musical instrument or singing, or playing scrabble and other card games). There are also some social events that offer great volunteer opportunities (such as the Halloween Party, Fashion Show, Casino Night, Movie Matinees at Grace Pointe, and decorating

Grace Pointe for Thanksgiving). You also have a unique opportunity to organize a Social Event of your choice (that must be approved) by the Activities Director during her visit to class.

During the 1st week of class, you will review volunteer options and make your choices by the 3rd week of class. You will keep written records documenting your volunteer hours, sign in at Grace Pointe, and also write a log (journal entry) for each day of volunteer experience. The Instructor and/or Graduate Assistant will meet with the Activities Director regularly to assess all students' progress in volunteering. You will analyze and discuss what you have learned at Grace Pointe, reflect upon your experiences there, and incorporate gerontological concepts from the course into a final course paper.

Required Text:

Novak, Mark. (2012). *Issues in Aging*, 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.

*Additional readings for each week are posted on this course's Blackboard Supplement:

<http://bb.unco.edu>

Evaluation of Student Work:

Final grades will be assigned on a full-point basis, and there are no plus or minus grades for this course. The final grade for the course will be based on:

Volunteer Activities Planning Paper	25
Individual In-class Quizzes; (3@50)	150
In-Class Weekly Journaling Assignment (4 collections@15)	60
Volunteer log (for site visits)	15
Final Service-Learning Paper	100
Final exam	30
Attendance	10
Total Points Possible:	390

*There are no extra credit assignments available for this course, so do your best to do well on each assignment and exam as you proceed.

<p><u>Grades will be assigned as follows:</u> A = 351-390 pts B = 312-350 pts C = 273-311 pts D = 234-272 pts F = below 234 pts</p>
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*There are no plus or minus grades for this course.

Service Learning Expectations

We will follow Rona Karasik's guidelines for service learning. As an engaged student learner, you must:

- Take responsibility and attend all off-campus site meetings (noted on the syllabus) as a required as part of the course.
- Take participation in service-learning seriously. Be present and fulfill your volunteer responsibilities as planned. Our community partner, Grace Pointe, is planning events that include our on time participation.
- By agreeing to participate, you are making a commitment to this agency, and they need to be able to count on you. Therefore, be sure to:
 - Show up on time, every time for your scheduled service hours (if you need to change your schedule, be sure to follow the procedures we will discuss in class and on Blackboard).

- Dress appropriately for your time on site (if you are not sure about how to dress, ask)
- Ask (and follow) agency policies for when you are sick
- Do not wait until late in the semester to begin your hours
- Talk with us (your Instructor, Graduate Assistant, and the Grace Pointe Activities Director) about questions or concerns you might have
- Take responsibility for keeping track of your service hours: signing in/out at Grace Point, complete a volunteer log entry for each visit, and complete your hours prior to the deadline noted in this Syllabus

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class meeting, on or off campus, and are expected to know all material covered in each class. Attendance will be taken during the beginning of each class session. I will not meet individually with students to go over information due to missed classes unless you have written documentation of an emergency. If you know you will miss more than one class this term, please take the course at another time.

Note: If you miss volunteer hours and off-site activities - such as the orientation, neighborhood walks or individual volunteer appointments - without properly contacting the Activities director at Grace Pointe and Dr. Weil (using the process discussed in class and posted on Blackboard) a minimum of 5 points will be deducted from your Final Service-Learning Paper for each missed activity/event. In addition, your ability to complete course assignments based on volunteer work will be impaired, negatively affecting your course grade.

Volunteer Activities Planning Paper

For this 2-page, double-spaced paper, you will answer questions about plans for your role as a volunteer (for example, strengths you bring to volunteering; issues you will need to work on) and talk about strategies for working with older people (including information from Reading #2). Additional guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard. You must hand in a copy of your completed transportation waiver form handed out in class with this assignment.

Three Quizzes (dates marked on the on the schedule in this Syllabus)

For dates marked on the syllabus, you will have an in-class quiz that covers course content and readings. I will give you 8 questions one class meeting before each quiz. Of the 8 questions, I will choose 5 that will be on the quiz. All quizzes are closed book with no notes used during the exam. There are no make-ups for quizzes/exams unless you bring me evidence of a documented, verifiable medical or family emergency *before* the day of the in-class assignment.

Weekly Journaling Assignment

As part of your course-work, you will create and write weekly in class, in an on-going journal as a place where you can reflect and think about what you learn in the course and your experiences during the interview process. Class time will be set aside so that you may journal your self-reflections about how topics discussed in the class affect your knowledge about/ experiences with working with older people. I will provide specific questions about each topic to guide your written reflection. Your journal will be collected 4 times during the semester. I will review it and provide comments and return the journal back to you by next class session. You must be in class to receive credit for a journal entry completed on that date.

Volunteer log

For every site visit, you will write a one-page entry or log containing the following information:

- Site Visit's: #, date/time, length of time spent
- Description of the physical environment of the site and specific features that you noted.
- Description of the social atmosphere of the site and specific features of interest.
- Discuss your overall impressions and summarize your activities/experience at the site.

Final exam

All students must take the final exam. During the scheduled time in finals week, each student will assess how they worked to carry out assignments. It will be an opportunity to express your personal thoughts about the assignments, your overall learning in the course, and any other aspect of your experiential learning experience. Questions will ask about: your successes and challenges along the way in the service-learning process, how you applied experience in the field to course materials, and things *not* covered in the course that would have been useful to know. You will be asked to assess your understanding of working with elders in the field. For example, in what areas do you think you might need more practice or knowledge? In what areas do you feel prepared to contribute your knowledge in the field? The date is noted on the schedule in this Syllabus.

Final Service-Learning Paper

The main goal of your individual, final service learning paper is to take your experiences from the field setting with elders and use them to illustrate concepts and materials learned formally throughout the course. Your paper will consist of your answers to a set of 10 questions with introduction and conclusion sections.

I will provide a list of Self-Paced Learning Reflection Questions (adapted and used with permission from Rona Karasik). They cover topics such as: myths/stereotypes about aging, older persons' feelings about aging, physical health changes, mental health changes, social interaction, issues of independence, elder housing, older persons' life satisfaction, social position and aging, elders' spirituality, and aging in place. You will select 10 questions from the list of 20 and answer the assigned question(s) based on your experience at Grace Pointe. You must combine examples from those experiences while formally tying in course concepts/theories/information from the Novak textbook and the course materials in each of your answers.

Technical details: There is no page number requirement, but the best papers submitted in the past are usually at least 8-10 pages total. You may use single or double spacing, with no more than a 12 point font. Your final service learning paper must be typewritten and handed in in print, in class, with all your Volunteer Logs from each site visit attached. The appearance of papers, including spelling, grammar, and neatness, will be taken into consideration when determining your grade. Specific guidelines for the Final Service-Learning Paper will be posted on Blackboard.

All final service learning papers must be a.) Submitted in class in print, and b.) Also uploaded to Safe Assign via "Submit Assignments" link on Blackboard before the final class starts. Safe Assign scans papers for plagiarism, and your written copy (with your volunteer log attached) will be graded. Papers are not accepted via e-mail, and a minimum of 5 points per day will be deducted for late papers.

Course and University Policies

Honor Code: All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. All students are required to know and follow the university honor code, which you can find at: <http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/index.html>. UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed.

Plagiarism is when you turn in work by someone else and claim it as your own. This includes the use of or copies from any source (books, the web, articles, papers) presented as your own writing, without citing a reference for the author. It also includes copying any resource (including on the web) word for word, without using quotation marks and without citing the page and original author. Finally, plagiarism includes copying from or presenting another student's work as your own. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the definition of plagiarism: <http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/students/definingPlagiarism.html>

Any student who claims another author's work as their own will receive a zero on the assignment and an F in the course.

Disability Access: Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

Texting, cell phones and electronic devices: Please extend courtesy to your instructor and fellow students by turning off your cell phones and text messaging. Laptops can be used only for note taking at the instructor's discretion and require prior approval.

Course readings: Students are responsible for reading the assigned chapters in the textbook and pdf readings posted on Blackboard before class. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class by the Instructor.

Dates	Chapter/Topic	Readings	Assignments due
Topic 1			
Demographic Information and Family History			
8/26-8/28	Introduction to Gerontology: studying aging as a multi-disciplinary field and What is experiential/service-learning?	Novak: Chapter 1 <i>Reading 1:</i> The Hidden Power of Age (Thomas)	In-class Introductions and review of service-learning policies and requirements
9/2-9/4	Theoretical Perspectives and Research Methods: ways to design and do research	Novak: Chapters 2 & 3 <i>Reading 2:</i> "Moving into senior housing: Adapting the old, embracing the new" (Carroll & Qualls)	9/4: Individual Interview Planning Paper due
9/9-9/11	Social Position and Aging: incorporating race, ethnicity, gender, and social class	Novak: Chapter 6 <i>Reading 3:</i> Diversity and Aging (Napier) <i>Guest speaker:</i> Madeleine Jacobs, Activities Director, Grace Pointe, 9/9	In class completion of Volunteer Forms
Topic 2			
Daily Activities, Social Support and Health			
9/16-9/18	Personal Health and Well-Being: age-related changes and "successful aging"	Novak: Chapter 4 <i>Reading 4:</i> Conducting a Biopsychosocial Assessment (McInnis-Dittrich)	9/16: Entire class meets at Grace Pointe for Orientation
9/23-9/25	Family Life and Social Support	Novak: Chapters 12 & 13	9/23: Group 1 to Grace Pointe for Neighborhood Walk with residents 9/25: Quiz 1
9/30-10/2	The Health Care System	Novak: Chapter 7 <i>Reading 5:</i> Caregiver Support in the V.A. (Sheets and Mahoney-Gleason)	9/30: Group 2 to Grace Pointe for Neighborhood Walk with residents 10/2: Journals due

Dates	Chapter/Topic	Readings	Assignments due
Topic 3 Programs and services for older adults			
10/7-10/9	Understanding Memory Loss and Alzheimer's Disease	<i>Reading 6:</i> Leaving the Farm (Greenlee) <i>Guest speaker:</i> Dani Flores, N.E. Colorado Regional Director, Alzheimer's Association, 10/7	10/9: Group 3 to Grace Pointe for Neighborhood Walk with residents
10/14-10/16	Finances and Economics	Novak: Chapter 8	10/16: Group 4 to Grace Pointe for Neighborhood Walk with residents
10/21-10/23	Retirement and Work	Novak: Chapter 9 <i>Reading 7:</i> Economics of Work and Older Persons and Retirement: A Changing American Institution (Sugar, Riekske, Holstege & Faber)	10/23: Quiz 2
10/28-10/30	Housing and Transportation: aging in place	Novak: Chapter 10 <i>Reading 8:</i> Creating Age-Friendly Communities (Scharlach)	10/30: Journals due
Topic 4 Experiencing aging			
11/4-11/6	The Life Course Perspective: development and creativity over one's life	Novak: Chapter 5 <i>Reading 9:</i> Telling the Stories of Life (Birren)	
11/11-11/13	Leisure Time and Quality of Life: maintaining well-being	Novak: Chapter 11 <i>Reading 10:</i> Their Story, My Story (Russell) <i>Guest speaker:</i> Marcia Shafer, Director, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, 11/11	11/13: Quiz 3
Topic 5 Other topics to explore			
11/18-11/20	Policies and Politics: Baby Boomers and beyond: the future of aging	Novak: Chapter 15 <i>Reading 11:</i> The Green House (Thomas)	11/20: Journals due
11/25 (No class on 11/27 due to Thanksgiving recess)	Death, Dying, and Palliative Care: creating a good end-of-life	Novak: Chapter 14 <i>Guest speakers:</i> Sue Sabas, Mandi McIntyre, Hospice of Northern Colorado, 11/25	
12/2-12/4	Wrapping up the fieldwork: Discussion of experiences at Grace Pointe		12/2: Final Service-Learning Paper due with all volunteer log/entries 12/4: Journals due (final collection)
12/8	Final Exam	Mon., Dec. 8th 10:45am-1:15pm	