

SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ON

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: PSYCHO-SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AGING

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CODE NO.: GER 210

SEMESTER: 3

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PROGRAM: COMMUNITY GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM

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AUTHOR: N. MCCLELLAND

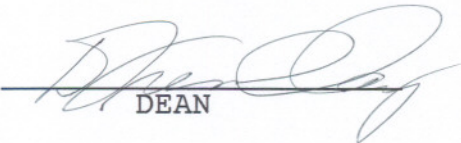
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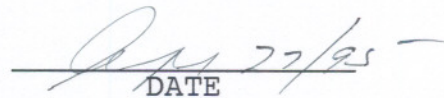
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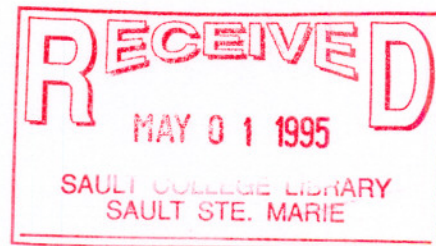
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TOTAL CREDITS: 90

PREREQUISITE(S): NONE

I. PHILOSOPHY/GOALS

**PART A: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING**

Students will learn specific social theories of aging, terms and concepts related to social gerontology and social demongraphics. They will be encouraged to break negative stereotypes of the elderly and to promote positive images of the aged. Other topics to review: social milestones and role changes, family and other relationships of the elderly as well as normal and maladaptive grief, demands of the concepts of retirement, work and leisure, role of religion, age of no religion and impact on society. Emphasis will be on multicultural aspects of aging, cultural minority groups, language and cultural variances and barriers and social policy implications on an aging society.

**PART B: PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING**

Psychological theories of aging, how biological and psycho-social factors influence mental health of the elderly. Students will examine how stress affects the health and coping strategies of the elderly. Review defense mechanisms and their purpose as well as learn common psychological disorders. Major classification of common psychotropic medications will be covered. Students will be encouraged to do holistic assessments with a psychogeriatric focus and develop a psycho-social philosophy of personal aging. Inclusive in this course is the current legislation, ex. mental health act, mental incompetency act, Substitutes Decisionmaking Act.



**II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES)**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will:

1. Define social gerontology and understand the conceptual framework as it relates to the social structure of aging.
2. Identify and explain the socio-demographic profile of the elderly.
3. Demonstrate how to promote positive images of aging.
4. Discuss the realities of the later adult years, mid life crisis, empty nest, living alone, widowhood, retirement, adult children returning home, etc. and how they impact on role changes and identity.
5. Discuss social structures in the later years, sexual relationships of elderly couples, family, kinship and kin structures and social networks.
6. Identify community resources that would provide emotional, social and/or financial assistance to clients in need.
7. Define the concept of retirement in Canada and develop a personal philosophy about retirement, examining adjustments needed to be made and opportunities for work and leisure.
8. Examine the influence of religion/non-religion on the aging adult.
9. Explore issues of cultural minority groups coping in later years, barriers to service delivery, as well as community resources available to assist.
10. Examine social policy implications on an aging society.

**PART B: PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING**

1. Examine the bio psycho-social changes that occur with age and how these influence the mental health of the elderly.
2. Identify responses indicating stress in the older adult, remain non-judgemental when assessing the stressors and situations and discuss coping strategies of the elderly.
3. Identify defense mechanisms when used and their purpose.



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II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

4. Differentiate between normal and maladaptive grieving, the presence of complicating factors and be accepting of unique expressions of grieving.
5. Examine the cultural and religious orientations in grieving.
6. Recognize responses indicating depression, dementia, delirium, the continuum of paranoid conditions, how the diagnosis is made and by who and appropriate management.
7. Identify major classifications of common psychotropic medications, observation of side effects.
8. Demonstrate how to communicate professionally with clients displaying psychopathology, intervene in a consulting capacity and make appropriate community referrals.
9. Develop and use tools for an holistic assessment with specific psychogeriatric focus.
10. Identify legislation relating to Mental Health Act, Mental Incompetency Act, Substitute Decision Makers Act and inform family members of guardianship rights, civil commitment, power of attorney, etc.

III. TOPICS TO BE COVERED

**PART A: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING**

Social Gerontology Concepts  
Socio-Demographic Profiles of the Elderly  
Promotion of Positive Images of Aging vs. Ageism  
Social Norms and Realities of Older Adults  
Social Structures and Networks of Older Adults  
Community Resources for Social Assistance  
Personal Philosophy About Retirement  
Influences of Religion/Non-Religion on the Aging Adult  
Seniors' Cultural Minority Groups Issues  
Social Policy Implications on an Aging Society



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II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

**PART B: PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING**

Bio-Psycho-Social Changes With Age  
Mental Health of the Elderly - Coping Strategies  
Stress in Older Adults  
Defense Mechanisms  
Normal/Maladaptive Grieving  
Cultural/Religious Orientations in Grieving  
Responses of Common Mental Health Conditions  
Common Psychotropic Medications  
Therapeutic Management Required for Dealing With Clients  
    Displaying Psychopathology  
Tools for the Holistic Assessment with a Psychogeriatric Focus  
Legislation Relating to Mental Health Act

IV. LEARNING ACTIVITIES/REQUIRED RESOURCES

**PART A: SOCIOLOGY OF AGING**

Social Gerontology

1. Define social gerontology and understand the conceptual framework as it relates to the social structure of aging (Watson 1982).
2. Define such terms as:
  - aging grading/age grading
  - age appropriate behaviour
  - rites of passage
  - age structure
  - status
  - age stratification
  - age period-cohort analysis
3. Review terms used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the elderly.
  - a) demographics
    - life span
    - life expectancy
    - age dependency ratio
    - aging/old society
    - socio-economic status
    - financial status
  - b) Interpret charts - graphs and tables presenting demographic data. Draw conclusions about demographic data and trends.



II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

4. a) Identify social theories of aging:
  - modernization
  - age stratification
  - disengagement
  - activity
  - continuity
  - exchange
  - social clock
- b) Evaluate social theories and extract theoretical components which facilitate a personal understanding of aging.

Images of Aging

5. Review common stereotypes of the elderly.
6. Explain the consequences of these stereotypes on individuals and society.
7. Differentiate between myths and facts of aging.
8. Discuss how to break negative stereotypes and promote positive images of aging. Demonstrate an ability to attach negative stereotypes and promote positive images of aging.

Resources: Quality of Life and Aging Manual

Social Norms, Structures & Realities of Older Adults

9. Explore the realities of "mid life crisis".
10. Develop an understanding of major transitions of later life and how they impact on role changes and identity, ex.:
  - empty nest
  - living alone
  - widowhood
  - retirement
  - adult children returning home
  - other
11. Discuss the implications of widowhood on individuals who have been married for many years.



II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

12. Examine how death affects the individual who has had:
  - a) an unhappy marriage
  - b) to deal with a lengthy illness before their spouse's death
13. Identify adjustments an individual must make upon becoming widowed.
14. Discuss implications of survivorship of mentally or physically frail children, frail spouses, etc.
15. Identify resources to refer seniors in need of family counselling.
16. Demonstrate a sensitive and empathetic attitude when relating to elderly clients and their life situations.
17. Discuss the topic of social/sexual relationships of elderly couples.
  - a) basic need to be loved/enjoy companionship
  - b) how couples can strengthen their relationship in the later years
18. Identify the role of gerontology workers in this topic:
  - a) ability to discuss topic of marital/intimate relationships without embarrassment
  - b) non-judgemental about varying values and morals of elderly partners
19. Examine kin structures and social networks between the elderly and:
  - aged siblings
  - adult children
  - grandchildren
  - grandchildren of divorced children
  - friends and neighbours
  - ex-spouses
20. Identify ways to promote involvement between the elderly and their family and friends.
21. Explore new avenues to assist seniors in finding and making new friends.
22. Explain the significance and dynamics of intergenerational relationships.
23. Review the term "sandwich generation" and explain how it affects both the elderly and the younger generation.



II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

24. Identify community resources that would provide emotional, social and financial assistance to those affected by the phenomena of the sandwich generation.

Work, Retirement, Leisure

25. Review concepts about work, leisure and retirement for seniors:
- Protestant work ethic: work past 65
  - mandatory retirement issues
  - discrimination of older workers
  - early retirement
  - prevalent retirement trends
26. List types of adjustments made with retirement in this area.
27. Examine work and leisure opportunities available to older adults in this area.
28. Describe ways to give recognition to older workers for their contribution to society.
29. Develop a personal philosophy about retirement and retirement policies in Canada.

Influence of Religion on Aging

30. Describe the significant role that religion and church participation have in the lives of the elderly.
31. Identify how religion is related to life satisfaction and attitudes toward death and dying.
32. Examine the relationship of those without religious beliefs and their respective attitudes toward death and dying.
33. Discover and identify the issues related to cultural minority groups coping in the later years.
34. Explain the barriers to service delivery due to language and cultural variations.
35. Identify ways to access services for seniors with special language and cultural needs.
36. Illustrate how to be sensitive to client's personal and ethnic values and differences.
37. Examine social policy implications of an aging society.



II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

PART B: PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING

Bio-Psycho-Social Dimensions of Aging

1. Review the psychological theories of aging.
  - a) Identify theories of aging:
    - classic conditioning
    - motivation
    - cognitive learning
    - stress adaptive
  - b) Evaluate these theories and extract theoretical components which facilitate a personal understanding of aging.
2. Identify the biological, sociological and psychological theories of aging and examine normal age related changes and how these changes influence the mental health of the elderly.
3. Review specific stereotypes associated with aging from a psychological viewpoint and discuss strategies to dispel these prejudices.

Stress

4. Identify responses indicating stress in the older adult.
5. Examine stress factors and how they affect physical and mental health.
6. Discuss coping strategies of the elderly and demonstrate respect for individual's coping behaviours.
7. Describe what is necessary to remain objective and non-judgemental when assessing stressors and stressful situations ex. physical abuse, loneliness and alcoholism.

Defense Mechanisms

8. Identify defense mechanisms and their purpose.
9. Identify specific defense mechanisms that clients may exhibit.











II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

Grief

11. Identify the grief response in different clients.
12. Demonstrate how empathy is shown for a client's loss.
13. Discuss how manifestations of grief are a response to loss.
14. Identify losses unique to the elderly, losses synonymous with aging:
  - short term memory loss
  - loss of nerve
  - loss of friends
  - changes in self perception
  - adjustment to limitations
  - challenges to self-esteem
15. Refer to Dr. Kubler-Ross' stages of grief for case situations in grief.
  - a) Identify the stage of grief presented by a client.
  - b) Identify when loss occurred.
  - c) Identify the presence of complicating factors.
  - d) Consider cultural and religious orientations in grieving.
  - e) Accept unique expressions of grieving in the elderly ex. increased somatization, idealization.
16. Differentiate between normal and maladaptive grieving.

Common Mental Health Conditions

17. Identify and explain common mental health conditions:
  - depression
  - dementia (Alzheimer's)
  - delirium
  - paranoid conditions
  - other cognitive impairments
18. For each mental health condition, identify:
  - frequency and distribution, classifications
  - responses to recognize
  - causes, stimuli, stressors
  - management strategies, by whom



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II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) CONTINUED

19. Determine who is best able to help depending upon the situation and where.
20. Demonstrate communication skills useful when dealing with individuals displaying psychopathology.
  - How would you intervene in a consulting capacity and make appropriate community referrals?

Psychogeriatric Assessment

21. Describe the purpose of a wholistic assessment, with a specific psychogeriatric focus.
22. Examine the components of a psychogeriatric assessment.
23. Demonstrate how to complete a wholistic assessment.
24. Assess the cognitive function of a senior using such tools as mini-mental status exam.
25. Discuss ways to show respect to the senior's dignity during an assessment.

Medications

26. Identify major classifications of common psychotropic medications used to treat the elderly (include indications for use and side effects).

Legislation

27. Identify pertinent legislation relating to incompetency.
  - Mental Health Act
  - Advocacy Act
  - Substitute Decisions Making Act
  - Consent to Treatment Act
  - Other
28. Discuss your role as Rights Advisor.
29. Demonstrate ability to talk with family members, to educate them about guardianship, financial incompetency, civil commitment and powers of attorney.
30. Demonstrate ability to empathize with the family re: difficulties in taking legal steps to protect a loved one.



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V. EVALUATION METHODS

A combination of tests and assignments will be used to evaluate student achievement of the course objectives. A description of the evaluation methods will be provided and discussed by the teacher in with the first two weeks of class.

VI. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Students who wish to apply for advanced credit in the course should consult the instructor. Credit for prior learning will be given upon successful completion of the following:

VII. REQUIRED STUDENT RESOURCES

Aging as a Social Process, 2nd edition, 1990. Dr. B. McPherson  
Psycho Social Assessment Tool (in class)

VIII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCE MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

IX. SPECIAL NOTES

Students with special needs (eg. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, learning disabilities) are encouraged to discuss required accommodations confidentially with the instructor.

Your instructor reserves the right to modify the course as he/she deems necessary to meet the needs of students.

X. COURSE ANALYSIS SHEET