

**THE SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
SAULT STE. MARIE, ON**



COURSE OUTLINE

Course Title: Psycho-Social Aspects of Aging

Code No.: GER 210

Semester: Three

Program: Community Gerontology Program

Author: Social Sciences Department

Date: August 2000

Previous Outline Dated: August 1998

Approved:

Judith Morris
Dean

June 2000
Date

Total Credits: 6 Prerequisite(s): PSY102, SOC120

Length of Course: 4 hours/week Total Credit Hours: 64

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Access, (705) 759-2554, Ext. 516**

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Part A: Sociology of Aging

Students will learn specific social theories of aging, terms and concepts related to social gerontology and social demographics. They will be encouraged to break negative stereotypes of the elderly and to promote positive images of the aged. Other topics to review: a) social milestones and role changes, b) family and other relationships of the elderly, c) normal and maladaptive grief, d) demands of the concepts of retirement, work and leisure, f) role of religion, g) 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

Students will learn psychological theories of aging and how biological and psycho-social factors influence the mental health of the elderly. They 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 studied. Students will be encouraged to do holistic assessments with a psychogeriatric focus and to develop a psycho-social philosophy of personal aging. Current legislation will also be studied, including the Mental Health Act, Mental Incompetency Act, and Substitutes Decision-making Act.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE:

A. Learning Outcomes:

Part A: Sociology of Aging

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

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

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

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
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 whom, and appropriate management
7. Identify major classifications of common psychotropic medications and 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 a holistic assessment with specific psychogeriatric focus
10. Identify legislation relating to the Mental Health Act, Mental Incompetency Act, Substitute Decision Makers Act, and inform family members of guardianship rights, civil commitment, power of attorney, etc.

B. Potential Elements of the Performance:

Upon successful completion of this course the student will:

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.
2. Define such terms as:
 - Aging grading/age grading
 - Age appropriate behaviour
 - Rites of passage
 - Age structure
 - Status
 - Age stratification
 - Age period-cohort analysis

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

Part A: Sociology of Aging (continued):

3. Review terms used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the elderly.
 - Demographics
 - Life span
 - Life expectancy
 - Age dependency ratio
 - Aging/old society
 - Socio-economic status
 - Financial status

- Interpret charts (graphs and tables presenting demographic data)
- Draw conclusions about demographic data and trends

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 the 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.

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

Social Norms, Structures and 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.
 - 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.
12. Examine how death affects individuals who have had:
 - An unhappy marriage
 - To deal with a lengthy illness before their spouse's death
13. Identify adjustments individuals 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.
 - Basic need to be loved/enjoy companionship
 - How couples can strengthen their relationship in the later years
18. Identify the role of gerontology workers in this topic.
 - Ability to discuss topic of marital/intimate relationships without embarrassment
 - Non-judgemental about varying values and morals of elderly partners
19. Examine kin structures and social networks among the elderly and among:
 - Aged siblings
 - Adult children
 - Grandchildren
 - Grandchildren of divorced children
 - Friends and neighbours
 - Ex-spouses

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

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.
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 age 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.

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

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.

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:

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, e.g. physical abuse, loneliness, and alcoholism.

Defense Mechanisms

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

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

Grief

10. Identify the grief response in different clients.
11. Demonstrate how empathy is shown for a client's loss.
12. 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's stages of grief for case situations in grief.
 - Identify the stage of grief presented by a client
 - Identify when loss occurred
 - Identify the presence of complicating factors
 - Consider cultural and religious orientations in grieving
 - Accept unique expressions of grieving in the elderly, e.g. 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, and by whom
19. Determine who is best able to help, depending upon the situation and where it occurs.

II. POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

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 holistic assessment, with a specific psychogeriatric focus.

22. Examine the components of a psychogeriatric assessment.

23. Demonstrate how to complete a holistic 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 Decision 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 regarding difficulties in taking legal steps to protect a loved one.

III. TOPICS

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

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 the Mental Health Act

IV. REQUIRED RESOURCES / TEXTS / MATERIALS:

1. Aging in a Changing Society, (1995) Thorson, James A. Wadsworth Publisher.
2. Psycho-Social Assessment Tool (in class)

V. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTING:

Student learning will be facilitated by lectures, class and group discussion, audio-visual presentations, and simulation exercises.

Students will be responsible for regular attendance and class participation in all areas of the course as outlined and for all readings and tests as requested. The course content and evaluation can be modified at the discretion of the instructor.

VI. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM (continued):

For both the sociology and psychology components of the course, evaluation will be as follows:

Tests	70%
Assignments	30%
TOTAL	100%

SPECIAL NOTES

If a student misses a test due to a verifiable illness or incident, the professor will determine if the student is eligible for an extension for an assignment or re-scheduling of a test. The student is ultimately responsible and obligated to contact the professor by phone, in person or in writing **PRIOR** to the assigned due date or test time. The touch-tone/24 hour number (759-2554) allows you to immediately notify the professor with your name, message and phone number.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT (GRADING METHOD):

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Grade Point Equivalent</u>
A+ Consistently outstanding	(90% - 100%)	4.00
A Outstanding achievement	(80% - 89%)	3.75
B Consistently above average achievement	(70% - 79%)	3.00
C Satisfactory or acceptable achievement in all areas subject to assessment	(60% - 69%)	2.00
R Repeat - The student has not achieved the objectives of the course, and the course must be repeated.	(less than 60%)	0.00
CR Credit exemption		
X A temporary grade, limited to situations with extenuating circumstances, giving a student additional time to complete course requirements		

NOTE: Students may be assigned a mid-term grade of "R" for unsatisfactory performance.

TIME FRAME

Psycho-Social Aspects of Aging GER 210 involves four hours per week for the semester.

VI. SPECIAL NOTES:

Special Needs

Students with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, learning disabilities) are encouraged to discuss required accommodations with the professor and/or contact the Special Needs Office.

Plagiarism

Students should refer to the definition of "academic dishonesty" in the "Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities."

Students who engage in "academic dishonesty" will receive an automatic failure for that submission and/or other such penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course.

In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the copyright of the material referenced and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

Advanced Standing

Students who have completed an equivalent post-secondary course must bring relevant documents to the Coordinator, Social Sciences Department:

- A copy of course outline
- A copy of the transcript verifying successful completion of the equivalent course

Note: A copy of the course outline must be kept on file in the Registrar's Office.

Retention of Course Outlines

Students are responsible for retaining all course outlines for possible future use in gaining advanced standing at other post-secondary institutions.

Substitute course information is available at the Registrar's office.

VII. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Students who have related employment-centered experience should see the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Coordinator.