

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
OFFICE OF EXTENDED STUDIES
COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

Independent Study Course

GERO 205 - Introduction to Gerontology (3 cr)

FACULTY: Susan Collins, Ph.D.

Course Description:

GERO 205 is a survey of the field of gerontology with attention to the physical, psychological, social, economic, and cross-cultural aspects of aging. No prerequisites required.

This course is an elective in the Human Services major. As stipulated in the University of Northern Colorado Bulletin, this course also fulfills the interdisciplinary course requirement (Category 7a) of the general education program (for students enrolled before fall 2006), and is a course in category 5c of the UNC Liberal Arts Core (for incoming students starting after Fall 2006). The course is also accepted for transfer under GtPathways. There are no prerequisites for this class.

Goals and Objectives:

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify social and historical trends, demographic characteristics, and social policies that have an impact upon the older population.
2. Identify physical, psychological, and social changes that occur with age.
3. Critically discuss and assess the issues facing older adults today.
4. Identify racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural differences among aging populations.
5. Discuss research trends and findings in the field of gerontology as demonstrated by your course assignments and examinations.

Required Text

Novak, Mark (2009). Issues in Aging, 2nd Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon (Pearson).
ISBN: 0-205-57869-1

The book may be purchased at the Bookstop in Greeley, Barnes & Noble UNC bookstore, or online. Used copies are fine, as long as they are the 2009 edition.

Evaluation (Grades)

The final grade course is based upon your accumulation of points for the following activities. All activities must be completed to receive a final grade for the course:

Thought Responses - 10 @ 10 points = 100

Three written projects (20, 50, 30) = 100

Two Exams @ 150 = 300

Total Points Possible = 500

Final letter grades are based on the following percentages:

90% and higher = A

80% to 89% = B

70% to 79% = C

60% to 69% = D

Below 60 = F There are no extra credit assignments available for this course, so please do your best to do well on each lesson, assignment, and exam as you proceed. This course does not have plus (+) or minus (-) grading.

Online Technology using Blackboard

This class is designed to take place completely on computer using Blackboard (and some e-mail). If you are having difficulty accessing materials on the site, uploading attachments, or any other technical problems, please call the UNC helpline at (970)-351-4357. There is a link with helpline information when you sign in to Blackboard, or you may go here:

<http://www.unco.edu/blackboard/index.htm>

For questions about course content, clarification of requirements, or any other course related feedback, please contact me by email.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

What will you be doing?

The course is divided into 16 Units. You should start with the first unit, and work your way through.

What Is Covered In Each Unit?

Introduction - A brief discussion of the material covered in the lesson.

Unit Objectives - Specifies particular knowledge that the student should obtain for the unit. Exam questions are based on the objectives. Note that objectives are fulfilled not only by textbook readings, but all other assignments as well.

Assignments - Each unit has a textbook reading assignment. You must also complete any other activities listed under this section, including reviewing visual aids and websites, completing projects or thought responses due after completing a particular part of the course, or taking an exam.

Some Units Have Additional Activities or Materials:

Thought Responses-In some lessons you will be asked to respond to a question that relates to a topic covered in that lesson. Compose a short, but well thought out response, and post it through the link to thought responses in the unit, or through the thought responses link on the course menu.

Projects - Projects are due at the end of specific Units. Click on the course menu "projects" link to see details for each of the three projects.

1. Project 1: Images of Aging in the Media (20 points)

You'll find images of aging on the web and write a critique of the image in terms of your gerontological knowledge.

2. Project 2: Housing and Environments for Later Life (50 points)

This assignment requires you to find out what kinds of residences exist in your town for older adults who need various levels of care. You'll then select one of these residences to visit, and conduct a short interview with someone in charge, and write a report on available elder housing in your area, your impressions of the place you visited, and a summary of the interview you conducted.

3. Project 3: Family and Friends (30 points) You'll define what the terms "family" and "friends" mean to you, and write an in depth narrative about your experiences and expectations of family and friends, including the role of older people in your family, and your hopes and expectations for yourself when old.

Presentations - Some topics have additional powerpoint or PDF presentations as attachments within the unit. Some of these files are large, so you might want to save them to disc or your computer before opening them.

Websites and other media - For some lessons I've listed different websites or suggested films, audio files, etc., that you can explore for that lesson. Except where specified, information from these will not be included in exams however, they can enrich your knowledge of course topics and inform your thought responses and projects.

(Why are there so many NPR audio links? Although there are other online audio and video sources, National Public Radio has good, short, trustworthy information in it's audio presentations that are relevant to this course, and often entertaining as well. Technologically speaking, this is one of the few audio sites I've found for our purposes, where audio links last, and don't disappear overnight.)

If you attempt to link to an audio file or web page and the link doesn't work or brings up a blank page, please let me know.

If you are unable to listen to audio files, many of the NPR links have a text story printed on the webpage that is either a transcript or summary of the audio story. There is also a link on the NPR homepage on how to access text versions on the web (these should be free).

TWO EXAMS (150 points each)

You will complete two unsupervised, open book exams for this course. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, t/f, matching, short essay, and short answer questions. Exam materials consist of all reading and other assigned materials. Unit objectives serve as a guide for the most important aspects of each lesson, but you will be responsible for all reading materials on the exams. There will be no additional exam review provided.

Each exam will cover specific units, and you will be instructed to let me know you are ready to take an exam when you get to the unit where it is offered. Once you let me know you are ready to take an exam, I will send you the password to make it available to you through the exams link on the course menu. You must complete the exam within 48 hours from when I send you the password.

General Information

Disability Statement

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the UNC Disability Support Services at 970-351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Library Services for Distance Education and Off-Campus Students: Obtaining Materials from UNC Libraries

Off-campus students residing within 50 miles of the UNC campus are required to come to the library and borrow materials in person. Students residing more than 50 miles from campus may request that materials be delivered to them. All requests must include complete citations. We will supply materials from the UNC Libraries, as well as materials from other libraries obtained via Interlibrary Loan. Articles will be delivered via email. Books will be mailed first class. Delivery time by U.S. postal service is approximately 1 week. It is the responsibility of the student to return books by the date due. UNC does not pay return postage on books. For information on document delivery, call (970) 351-1446.

Requests for materials may be made through the following methods:

Online: <http://www.unco.edu/library/forms/distancerequest.htm>

By email: library.ocp@unco.edu

By fax: (970) 351-2540

Student Satisfaction Evaluation

Participants will be asked to evaluate the workshop for instructors' knowledge, interest and enthusiasm as well as providing additional information on classes or topics which you would like to see developed as a future offering from UNC.

Academic Conduct

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. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate. UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Student's website, Student Handbook link <http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html>

Course Units

Unit 1 Aging Today

Project 1, on the media and aging, should be done after completing Unit 1

Unit 2 Theories and Methods of Study

Unit 3 Aging at Other Times, Places

Unit 4 Demography

Unit 5 Health and Well-being

Unit 6 Life Span Development

Unit 7 Race & Ethnicity

After completing Unit 7 you should request Exam 1. Please send me an email with this request.

Unit 8 Health Care Systems

Unit 9 Finances & Economics

Unit 10 Retirement & Work

Unit 11 Housing & Transportation

Project 2 should be conducted after completing Unit 11

Unit 12 Leisure, Recreation, Education

Unit 13 Family Life & Social Support

Project 3 should be done after completing unit 13

Unit 14 Death & Dying

Unit 15 Politics & Policies

Unit 16 Gerontology and YOU

After completing Unit 16 you should request Exam 2. Please send me an email with this request.