1. ASCRC General Education Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept/Program</td>
<td>School of Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #</td>
<td>SW 455S</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Social Gerontology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite</td>
<td>NA</td>
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II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Cynthia Garthwait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>243-2954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Ryan Tolleson Knee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Dave Forbes</td>
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III. Description and purpose of the course:

General Education courses must be introductory and foundational. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students’ future lives: See Preamble:

http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm

Examination of the field of social gerontology, including the major bio/psycho/social/cultural/spiritual theories of aging, the service system, social and health issues, family and caregiving dynamics, social policy, and end of life concerns.

IV. Criteria:

Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group. See:

http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm

This course presents a systematic study of the field of gerontology, including the individual experience of aging as it is impacted by the social environment. This includes an examination of biological, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural facets of aging. The course requires students to analyze how individuals age in the context of social structures, attitudes, and policies. The course requires students to understand the problems and possibilities of the aging experience for the individual, the family, the community, and society. The course expects students to understand a variety of theories of aging, critique them, and understand how their use both limits and expands understanding about aging. This involves the application of critical thinking skills to the ways in which research, including data collection and analysis, informs the field of gerontology.
### V. Student Learning Goals:
Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable learning goals. See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Ad ocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Ad ocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm)

The course examines the aging process from a broad multidimensional perspective, including a lifespan view, a sociohistorical context view, a societal structural view, and an interactional view. Students are required to apply theories of aging to case studies and real interviews with community-based elders. The course requires students to demonstrate through papers, examinations, and reports on elder interviews their understanding of how knowledge about aging is acquired, utilized, and analyzed.

### VII. Syllabus:
Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: [http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html](http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html)

*Please note: As an instructor of a general education course, you will be expected to provide sample assessment items and corresponding responses to the Assessment Advisory Committee.*

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**SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY**  
**SOCIAL WORK 455**  
Monday/Wednesday 11:10-12:30, Journalism 307  
**FALL 2008**

**CINDY GARTHWAIT, MSSW, INSTRUCTOR**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**JEANNETTE RANKIN HALL 004**  
**MISSOULA, MONTANA 59812**  
Telephone: 243-2954  
Email: cynthia.garthwait@umontana.edu
PURPOSE

- Is aging an experience to which you look forward, or is aging something you wish to avoid, both as an academic area and as a personal experience?
- What about the aging process itself contributes to your attitudes toward aging?
- Is growing old in America a positive or negative experience, and why is it good or bad?
- What specifics of the societal context, including social systems, social policies, family constellations, health care, financial security, diversity, and assumptions about aging shape the ways in which we frame and describe aging?
- What strengths of older adults can be brought to bear on the experience of positive aging, and what concerns and problems are faced by elders in this society?

These questions and others will be considered in Social Gerontology, as students increase their knowledge and understanding of the developmental theories and processes of older adulthood. The course will focus on the physical, cognitive, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural influences on older persons. An ecological perspective and a critical perspective will be taken, as well as a social systems theoretical orientation to understanding the environment of aging, including the impact of the social environment and social justice issues.

Students will be given the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts, professional skills, and social work values in a service learning project. Using service learning as one of the primary pedagogical methods, and in collaboration with two community partner organizations serving older persons, the instructor and students will participate in a project geared toward the teaching of communication skills with the elderly, including the therapeutic tools of life review and reminiscence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe and critique the major theories of adult development
- Describe and critique the major theories of aging
- Demonstrate an initial understanding of the normal and pathological changes in older adulthood
- Understand issues related to death, dying and bereavement
- Develop an awareness of their own personal attitudes and values related to adulthood (e.g., ageism, sexism, ambivalence,
Understand the impact of societal attitudes and social justice issues on adult development and aging
Increase their sense of civic responsibility as a result of the service learning component of the course
Integrate academic concepts with community based projects
Reflect upon their service learning activities, thereby developing into “reflective practitioners”
Articulate societal implications of their classroom learning (e.g., organizational analysis, social policy analysis, service delivery)
Examine and clarify their own personal and professional values and ethics regarding the aging process, set within the ethics of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
Demonstrate an ability to utilize demographic projects to anticipate and plan for the future of the aging population

REQUIRED READINGS


TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

August 25 Introduction
August 27 Theories and Models of Adult Development and Aging
Albom, pp. 1-54
Text Chapter 1 “The Field of Social Gerontology”
Text Chapter 4 “Demography of Aging”

September 1 LABOR DAY (Holiday)
September 3 Positive Aging
Text Chapter 2 “Theories of Aging”

September 8 Communication with Older Adults
Text Chapter 5 “Historical Perspectives on Aging”
Albom, pp. 55-113
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>Interviewing Skills with Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>“Camilla” movie with Jessica Tandy and Bridget Fonda</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
<td>Psychology of Aging</td>
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<td>Text Chapter 7 “Psychological Perspectives on Aging”</td>
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<td>September 22</td>
<td>Life Review and Reminiscence</td>
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<td>September 24</td>
<td>Spirituality and Aging</td>
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<td>Text chapter 3 “Life Course Transitions”</td>
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<td>September 29</td>
<td>Biology of Aging</td>
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<td>Text Chapter 6 “Biological Perspectives on Aging”</td>
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<td>October 1</td>
<td>Biology of Aging</td>
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<td>“Surfing for Life” movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>Mental Health and Aging</td>
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<td>October 8</td>
<td>Elder Abuse</td>
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<td>Tuesdays with Morrie reaction paper due</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Family and Caregiving Issues</td>
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<td>Text Chapter 8 “Family Relationships and Social Support”</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>University Center Table for Careers in Aging Week</td>
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<td>October 20</td>
<td>Housing / Physical Environment</td>
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<td>Tex Chapter 9 “Living Arrangements”</td>
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<td>October 22</td>
<td>Examination #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Tour of Missoula living facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Diversity and Aging</td>
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ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

100 points Attendance and Participation
  • Students are expected to attend class, and roll will be taken.
• Students are to participate in discussions, come to class having completed assigned readings, and demonstrate the ability to integrate readings into class discussions.
• Also included in this grading category is classroom participation in reflective activities focused on the research project and elder visits.
• Excessive absences will result in a lowered grade in the course.

100 points   Examination #1
100 points   Reaction paper on *Tuesdays with Morrie*
100 points   Examination #2
100 points   Service Learning Project
            Students will work with the professor in designing, organizing and offering a table on careers in aging in the UC Atrium during the semester.
200 points   Elder Interview / Research
            This includes one 2 hour interview with an elder in the community using interview / discussion instruments provided by the instructor, written reflection on the interview, and student participation in classroom discussions during the semester and on the last day of class.

700 points available

A  630-700
B  560-629
C  490-559
D  420-489
F  0-419

Plus and Minus grades may be used for borderline grades.

Late assignments (unless excused by the professor) are given a deduction of .5 letter grade. Extra credit opportunities will be provided throughout the semester.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**
*Tuesdays with Morrie REACTION PAPER*

“Everyone knows they’re going to die, but nobody believes it. If we did, we would do things differently.” (Morrie Schwartz)

“Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.” (Morrie Schwartz)

“Aging is not just decay, you know. It’s growth. It’s more than the negative that you’re going to die, it’s also the positive that you understand you’re going to die, and that you live a better life because of it.” (Morrie Schwartz)

Getting to know the unique and powerful dying man named Morrie Schwartz through the eyes of Mitch Albom, you will no doubt have personal reactions that raise questions about how you are living your own life in preparation for both aging and dying. Write a 7-8 page reaction paper to the book that demonstrates in what ways you have been influenced by this man’s life and philosophy, and how you plan to use these ideas in your personal and professional lives. The paper is also to demonstrate your learning about aging, dependency, and dying from Morrie’s perspective. Make clear to the instructor how you integrate his ideas with ideas presented in class and textbook concepts.

Possible reflection topics could be the following. You are not limited to these topics, however.

- What are the most important concepts Morrie has to teach about aging, dependency and dying?
- How do these ideas fit or not fit with contemporary U.S. beliefs and attitudes about life and death?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of one’s view of aging, dependency, and dying?
- How do Morrie’s ideas fit with human development theories such as Erik Erikson and Robert Peck? How do they fit with ideas presented in *Aging and the Life Course: An Introduction to Social Gerontology*?
- How will what you learned from reading *Tuesdays with Morrie* assist you in your professional work with older adults and families?
- How do Morrie’s ideas fit with theories / models of aging presented in class?
- In what ways did Morrie’s ideas influence your personal thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes about your own aging and views of death?

This paper will be graded on the following criteria:

- Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Indications of thoughtfulness and critical reflection
- Balance between thoroughness and concise expression of ideas
- Well organized, showing clarity of thoughts
- Goes beyond reporting surface content to interpretation, analysis, and original ideas
- Integrates class readings and class discussions
Addresses the 7 questions above

**ELDER INTERVIEW / RESEARCH**

Many students report that community based projects provide them with real life, exciting, scary, challenging, and rewarding learning opportunities that go beyond academic concepts to the application of these concepts, the examination of underlying ethics, the analysis of social policy related to aging, the developing of helping skills and therapeutic techniques, and the change to weave together and integrate theory and practice.

You will be given this opportunity and a gift this semester by being matched with an elder residing in the community. You will be trained in class in the use of interviewing for a research project on spirituality over the lifespan. You will meet with an elder for approximately 2 hours, depending on the circumstances.

You will be making a contribution toward the professional knowledge about spirituality over the life span. You will be providing a service to an elder who gets to reflect on his/her life experiences and share them with others. You will also be served in return because if you are open to this experience, you will learn about not only your elder’s life and spirituality, but the sociohistorical context of his/her life. You will also hopefully begin to reflect on the stages of your life, how you have been influenced by the events in your life, and what sort of person you wish to become. Perhaps you may even be matched with someone like Morrie. It is the hope of the instructor that you and your assigned elder will touch each others’ lives in a significant way that leaves you both changed.

Your reflection paper (3-4 pages double spaced) is to focus on the following ideas and questions:

- Concepts you have learned from your elder regarding aging and spirituality
- Reactions to your interviews with your elder
- Questions you have as a result of meeting your elder
- Observations you have about your elder
- Questions you have about aging as a result of your interviews
- Insights you have gained regarding aging
- Insights you have gained regarding yourself
- Emotional reactions you experienced
- Personal growth you have experienced
- Ideas for integrating this experience into your professional work
- How your interview relates to classroom content and discussions

Examples of student reflections and classroom discussions could also include:

- “I wonder why I was no nervous about interviewing an older person. Why was I so uncomfortable?”
- “My elder reminds me of my grandmother, so it was hard for me to be objective about her.”
“Thinking about aging still makes me sad, although I am beginning to see some of the positive aspects of aging.”

“My elder was much like Morrie in many ways. He is definitely his own person.”

“My elder is a great example of the activity theory and the phenomenological theories of aging.”

“My elder taught me a great deal about how spirituality and religion evolves over the life span. This makes me want to explore my spirituality more.”

“Why does society not value older people? How can that be changed?”

“My elder was very open with me. I believe that I gained much more from him than he did from me.”

“My elder has a very positive attitude toward aging. I think that is because she has a solid sense of self and a strong spiritual orientation.”

What do I need to know about social policies and programs in order to help older adults and their families?

What competencies will I need to work well with elders?

UNIVERSITY CENTER TABLE ON CAREERS IN AGING

Students and the professor will plan, organize and man a table in the University Center during the course that focuses on careers in aging. Students will plan the format, content, hours, and set goals for interacting with students as well as information to be provided.

SUGGESTED READINGS


**SUGGESTED ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

[www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org) (Source for Five Wishes advance directives)

[www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org) (American Society on Aging)

[www.geron.org](http://www.geron.org) (Gerontological Society of America)

[www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org) (National Alliance for Caregiving)

[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org) (National Council on Aging)


[www.aahsa.org](http://www.aahsa.org) (Institute for the Future of Aging Services)
