

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
College of Social Work

SW 566 - Social & Cultural Aspects of Aging  
(3 Credit Hours)  
Summer 2018  
Online

Prerequisite(s): 510, 512, 513, 519, 522, 537, 538, 539 and 543 or 544.

**Instructor Information**

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Code of Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook ([www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu)). Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

The Honor Statement

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*).

University Civility Statement

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus:

<http://civility.utk.edu/>

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 100 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

### Dimensions of Diversity

The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

### **Course Description**

This course is a concentration elective course. This course examines the social and cultural aspects of aging with special emphasis on diversity and social policies. This course critically examines the effect of social issues and policies on multicultural client systems, organizations, agencies and communities.

### **Course Rationale**

Due to improvements in health awareness and medical technology, as well as demographic changes, the number of older people in the U.S. and most other countries is increasing rapidly. This trend has profoundly changed society in the past quarter-century and will continue to do so well into the next century. As a result, interest in the aging process has grown considerably within the last 25 years. The rapid increase of older persons will require an enormous increase in the number of professionals trained and competent to work with older adults and their families. This course will examine social and cultural aspects of aging, with special emphasis on issues of diversity along with social policies and practices that may perpetuate oppression, discrimination and social injustice.

**Course Competencies:** By the completion of this course, students are expected to be able to demonstrate competency to:

- 1) Identify and evaluate social theories and culturally related perspectives on aging and caregiving. *Diversity 3, Diversity 4, Critical Thinking 1 & 3, Practice 3 (Content: Social Theories of Aging. For example: Role Theory, Activity Theory, Disengagement Theory, Continuity Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Age Stratification Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Life Course Perspective)*
- 2) Identify, understand & discuss social challenges facing older adults and the implications of those challenges for social work practice. *Critical Thinking 1-3, HBSE 2, Practice 1, Policy 2 & 3 (Content: Social Connectedness, Employment, Volunteering, Poverty, Social Security, Health & Social Service Utilization, Sexuality &, Intimacy, Family Relationships, Intergenerational Issues, Housing, Violence among the Aged, Self-Neglect, Death & Dying, Grief & Bereavement, Suicide, Advanced Directives)*
- 3) Recognize multi-cultural issues among older adults and assess barriers to culturally relevant service delivery for client systems *Diversity 1-3, Practice 1, Values & Ethics 2, (Content: Elders of Color, Gender Discrepancies, GLBT Elders, Elder Immigrants, Intergenerational Issues)*
- 4) Analyze ethical and resolve ethical dilemmas encountered in social work practice with older adults and their families that may arise in practice. *Values & Ethics 1-3, Practice 1 (Content: GLBT Elders, Elder Immigrants, Health & Social Service Utilization, Gender Differences in Aging, Caregiving, Abuse, Neglect, Self-Neglect, Assisted Suicide, Advanced Directives)*

### **Course Format**

This course will be offered using on **online** education format and supported through the use of Canvas and Zoom. The class will meet collectively for **mandatory LIVE** sessions five times during the semester: **July 12 at 7-8pm (CST); July 19 at 7-8pm (CST); July 26 at 7-8pm, August 2 at 7-8pm (CST) and August 9 at 7-8PM (CST)**. Students can expect to spend *at least* six to eight hours per week on class related tasks that may include but are not limited to: reading assigned materials; participating in discussion boards; viewing online resources such as videos or websites; and other assignments. Students are responsible for **actively participating** in all assigned tasks on an ongoing basis.

### **LIVE Session Participation**

Participation in LIVE online sessions is **mandatory**. Students are required to communicate to the professor as early as possible if a session is to be missed. **Please mark your calendars and make every effort to attend sessions.**

**An extra field assessment may be assigned for a missed class.**

**Assigned Readings**

Hooyman, N. R. & Kiyak, H. A. (2011). Social Gerontology: A Multidisciplinary Perspective. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205-76313-9.

**Grading Scale**

The final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Facility Assessments	100 Points
Elder Interview	100 Points
Attendance & Participation (Awarded at the end of the semester)	100 Points

The points will translate to the following course grade:

A	300-270
B	269-240
C	239-210

## Course Outline

### **Class 1 – Social Theories & Cultural Perspectives on Aging**

#### Tasks:

- Syllabus Review
- Introductions

#### Homework:

- Assignment: *Assessment of Long Term Care Facilities*
- View Video: Life in Ikaria
- Read Text Chapter 8, *Social Theories of Aging*
- Read text Chapter 9, *The Importance of Social Supports*
- Read Text, Chapter 10, *Opportunities and Challenges of Informal Caregiving*
- Read Gray et al. (2009), *Ethnic differences in beliefs regarding Alzheimer disease among dementia family caregivers*

#### Course Competencies/Content:

*CC 1 & 3 - Social Theories of Aging, Role Theory, Activity Theory, Disengagement Theory, Continuity Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Age Stratification Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Life Course Perspective, Elders of Color*

*CC 2, 3 & 4 - Content: Family Caregiving, Elders of Color, Intergenerational Issues*

### **Class 2 – Resilience of Elders of Color and Older Women**

#### Tasks:

- Assignment: *Assessment of Long Term Care Facilities* - Due by July 19 at 4pm CST
- Discuss Video: Life in Ikaria
- Discuss Chapters 8 - 10 & Gray reading.

#### Homework:

- Assignment: *Interview - Older Adult*
- View Video: *The Thin Edge of Dignity* by Dick Weinman
- Read Text, Chapter 14, *The Resilience of Elders of Color*
- Read Text, Chapter 15, *The Resilience of Older Women*

#### Course Competencies/Content:

*CC 2, 3 & 4/Content: Poverty, Social Security, Elder Immigrants, Health Care & Social Service Utilization, Poverty & Elders of Color, Poverty & Gender Discrepancies*

### **Class 3 – Living Arrangements**

#### Tasks:

- Assignment: *Interview - Older Adult* – Due by July 26 at 4pm CST
- Discuss Video: *The Thin Edge of Dignity* by Dick Weinman
- Discuss Chapters 14 & 15

#### Homework:

- Read Text, Chapter 11, *Living Arrangements & Social Interactions*
- Read Gonyea et al (2010), *The complexities of elder homelessness*
- Read: AARP (2010), *Home Modifications to Promote Independent Living*
- Read Lehning, Nicklett, Davitt & Wiseman (2017), *Social Work and Aging in Place: A Scoping Review of the Literature*

#### Course Competencies/Content:

*CC 2, 3 & 4/Content: Poverty, Health Care & Social Service Utilization, Poverty & Elders of Color, Poverty & Gender Discrepancies, Homelessness*

*CC 2 /Content: Elder-Friendly Communities, Universal Design*

*CC 2 /Content: Housing, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities*

### **Class 4 – End of Life**

#### Tasks:

- Discuss Chapter 11 & Readings

#### Homework:

- Read Text, Chapter 13, *Death, Dying & Bereavement*
- Read Text, Chapter 12, *Productive Aging: Paid and Unpaid Roles & Activities*
- Listen to University of Buffalo (2008) interview with Dr. Waldrop, *End of Life Care for our Nation's Elderly* (Parts 1, 2, & 3)
- Read Carr (2011), *Racial differences in end-of-life planning*
- Randy Pausch Last Lecture

#### Course Competencies/Content:

*CC 2, 3 & 4 /Content: Death & Dying, Grief & Bereavement, Suicide, Assisted Suicide, Advanced Directives*

## **Class 5 – Productive Aging**

### Tasks:

- Discuss Chapters 12 & 13
- Discuss Randy Pausch Last Lecture & End-of-life readings
- Explore the following aging related websites:
  - Parkinson Voice Project
  - Pioneer Network
  - Poetic Salvation
  - AARP

### Course Competencies/Content:

*CC 2 & 3/Content: Retirement Issues, Economic and Lifestyle Issues, Lifelong Learning.*

*CC 2/Content: Social Connectedness, Employment, Volunteering*

### **Assessment of Long Term Care Facilities**

The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to assess the physical and social environment of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. In doing so, students will demonstrate mastery of their ability to identify, recognize and discuss social challenges faced by elder living in these environments and the implications for social work practice (Course Competency 2).

Students will conduct an assessment of **one nursing home and one assisted living** facility using instruments provided by the instructor. These instruments can be found attached to this Assignment in the Canvas course site.

In addition to completing the assessment instruments, students will write a one-page summary of their reactions. *The summary will include an assessment of each facility's strengths and weaknesses along with the student's recommendations on how social workers could enhance the quality of life for residents of these facilities.*

Facility Assessment papers are due at **4:00 PM (CST) July 19** and **NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT TIME. All assessments must be submitted via Canvas. No assessments will be accepted by email.**



### **Interview – Older Adult**

The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate mastery of course competencies 1-4 based on an interview with an older adult and application of knowledge acquired through course materials. Students are to interview an older adult (70 years plus) who is a *different gender and race/ethnicity* from themselves. Based on this interview students will write a paper summarizing the following points.

1. **Productive Aging:** How would you explain the social connectedness of the older adult interviewed? What are his/her dreams and challenges and how do they compare to the AARP Report?
2. **Poverty & Aging:** How did the older adult's income change after retirement? What is his/her knowledge of health and social programs? To what extent does this individual use health and social programs? How does the older adult's situation compare with state and national statistics covered?
3. **Marriage & Family:** What is the older adult's current relationship with his/her family? In what way have these relationships changed over the his/her life?
4. **End of Life:** What is the older adult's current end of life wishes? Has he/she taken steps to create advanced directives? Why does he/she think this is/is not important? How does the older adult's end of life wishes compare to the cultural perspectives on death?
5. **Social Theory:** What social theory do you think best explains the older adult's approach to aging and why? Support your decision with concrete examples.
6. **Implications for Practice:** What are the social challenges facing this individual and the implication of those challenges for social work practice?
7. **Ethical Issues:** What possible ethical issues could be encountered in practice with this individual and his/her family and how would you resolve them?

Grades will be assigned based on the thoroughness and accuracy of student responses. Application of course materials and mastery of course competencies must be clearly evident and will factor into the student's score. The elder interview is **due on July 26 at 4:00 PM (CST). NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. All interviews must be submitted via Canvas. No interviews will be accepted via email. Use the headings provided (points 1-7).**