

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

NASHVILLE CAMPUS

SW566

SOCIAL WORK WITH OLDER ADULTS

Spring 2003

Instructor: Dr. Sherry Cummings

Class Time: Tuesdays, 1:10-3:45

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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* 2002).

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 CSW MSSW handbook. www.csw.utk.edu

Disability Accommodations

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

Course Description

This class explores the demographic, biopsychosocial, and cultural aspects of aging in a n effort to gain in-depth knowledge about the elderly population and the concerns facing elders in American society. The social work implications of aging for individuals, families, and society are examined. This course explores the aging process and the experience of aging from a variety of perspectives: physiological, psychological, and sociocultural. Emphasis is placed on understanding the normative changes associated with the aging process, as well as the ways in which those changes are experienced personally and societally. Adaptive and maladaptive responses are considered. Theoretical perspectives relevant to the aging process, including disengagement theory, activity theory, and life-span development theory are examined. Economic, social, and psychological concerns of well and vulnerable elderly, particularly minority and women elderly will be discussed.

Rationale

The expected rapid of the elderly population will require an enormous increase in the number of social workers trained to work with older adults and their families. Knowledge regarding biological, psychological and social aspects of later life essential for social workers who wish to understand the unique challenges facing this very diverse population and who seek to provide effective service and their family members.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss social work implications of population aging and individual aging.
2. Describe the common physical, cognitive, psychological and social challenges facing older adults, and the implications for social work practice.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the mental disorders found in later life and of the mental health issues faced by older adults and their family members.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of special approaches to assessment and contemporary intervention modalities for use with older clients and their families.
5. Understand the goals of major social policies and programs designed to enhance the lives of older adults and the current challenges with which they are faced.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues encountered in social work practice with older adults and their families and the ability to thoughtfully analyze ethical dilemmas that commonly arise.
7. Discuss multicultural issues in the older population, specifically race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.
8. Demonstrate an understanding about the various roles and positions social work practitioners hold in providing service to the older population.

Format

The course will be run as a seminar, which means that **both** the instructor and the students are responsible for participating in classroom activities and discussion. For this reason regular attendance at class sessions is critical. Additionally, students must be prepared for all class sessions, having read the assigned reading material and completing any expected activities before class.

Texts

Required

Hooyman, N. & Kiyak, H.A. (1998). *Social Gerontology* (5th ed). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Reserved Readings - **all reserve readings have been digitized and can be accessed through this course's Online@utk site

Binsotck, R. (1994). Changing criteria in old-age programs: the introduction of economic status and need for services. The Gerontologist, 34, 726-730.

Cruikshank, M. (2003). Learning to Be Old. pp. 1-7. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Freedman, M. (1994). Helping home bound elderly clients understand and use advanced directives. Social Work in Health Care, 20, 61-73.

Hudson, R. (1995). The History and place of age-based public policy. Generations, fall, 5-10.

Kropf, N. P. (2002). Home Health and Community Services in In Schneider, R.L. & Kropf, N.P. (1999). Gerontological Social Work. pp. 167-190. Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers.

Moody H. R. Should older people be protected from bad choices? In H. R. Moody (ed), Aging: Concepts and Controversies, pp. 95-118. thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forest Press.

Moody, H.R. (1998). The cost of autonomy: The price of paternalism. Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 29, 111-127.

Parkes, C.M. (2000). Bereavement as a psychosocial transition. In D. Dickenson, M. Johnson & J.S. Katz (eds) pp 325-331. London: Sage Publications.

Rowe, J.W. & Kahn, R.L (1997). Successful Aging. Gerontologist, 37, 433-440.

Seabold, G. (1997). Surviving a partner's death deeply in the closet. In M. Shernoff (ed). Gay Widowers: Life after the death of a partner. Haworth Press.

Tice, C.J. & Perkins, K. (1996). Conducting a strengths assessment. In Mental Health Issues and Aging. Pacific Grove: Books/Cole Publishing Company, pp. 33-48

Zarit, S & Zarit., J. (1998). Mental Disorders in Older Adults. New York: Guildford Press.

Zilberfein, F. (1999). Coping with Death: Anticipatory grief and bereavement. Generations, XXIII, 69-74

Course Requirements

1. **Assessment of Elder Client** - The assessment should be 8-10 double spaced pages in length and should reflect the assessment concepts and strategies covered in course readings and lectures. Your assessment should include summaries of the following:
 - a. Identifying info: sex, age, ethnicity or race, living arrangements, financial resources, marital status. Include a brief description of your relationship with the person including the context/circumstances of the interaction.
 - b. Presenting Problem: reason(s) the client is seeking assistance. If you are using an older person whom you know instead of a client indicate the greatest challenge(s) the individual is facing at this point in his/her life.
 - c. Strengths: personal and environmental
 - d. Physical Status: disabilities, chronic or acute illnesses, ADL & IADL functioning, sensory impairments. *Indicate what, if any, impact these have on psychological and social functioning.*
 - e. Psychological status: mental status, current or history of past psycho pathology, coping abilities.
 - f. Relevant information about personal history, previous functioning, and responses to major psychosocial stressors.
 - g. Ecological context: fit between individual's capabilities/limitations and system capabilities/limitations.
 - h. Results if a standardized measurement tool - select and administer a brief standardized scale that measures a domain that is relevant to the primary challenge with which your client is dealing (e.g. well-being, depression, burden, morale, social support). Describe the scale, the scoring (e.g. possible scores range from 0-20 with higher scores indicating greater social support) and the score for your client.
 - i. Overall assessment of the client's's current functioning, including strengths and vulnerabilities.
 - j. Based upon your assessment develop a treatment plan to assist the elder in dealing with the problem(s) identified and to enhance his/her functioning/quality of life.

Use headers to identify the various sections of your paper. The grade will be based upon the **clarity** with which you are able to describe your case, the **depth** of your assessment and the **quality** of your writing (i.e. organization, clarity, spelling and grammar). Assessment papers are due on Class #8 (Mr. 4th). Students should e-mail me their papers by **noon (CT)** on Mr. 4th. Please **name the file containing your paper as yourlastname.assess**. You can attach your file as either a WordPerfect or a Word document.

2. **Group Presentations** - each student will participate in a group presentation which

focuses on either a Special Issue related to later life. Special topics include: alcoholism in later life; centenarians; issues faced by gay/lesbian elders; grandparents raising grandchildren; elders with HIV/Aids; or elder abuse. Please select a topic that is interesting to you and will be helpful with your education and career goals. The groups will have **40 minutes** for their presentation plus 5 minutes for questions and answers. See the Guidelines for Presentations on the last page of this syllabus for further information.

3. **Web Links Research** - there is a tremendous amount of information about aging and aging-related resources on the web that can be very helpful to professionals, elders and caregivers. However, because there is so much information it is often overwhelming for one person to find the resources they need on the web when they need it. This assignment has been designed to help you as future professionals working with elders get a handle on all this information. Your web-links research is to focus on the topic you have selected for presentation later in the semester. A list of web links will be given to all students to help you begin your search. The purpose of your research is to find out what type of information is out there and to identify the type of person that the information would be most helpful for: elder, caregiver/family members, or geriatric professional.

1. The groups should review web sites thoroughly and describe the type of information the site contains. The description of the type of information the site contains should be done in sufficient enough detail to give other class members a good working understanding of the site. For instance stating that a site contains information on caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease is much too vague and, therefore, not very useful. Questions would remain concerning whether the site contains information on dealing with difficult behaviors, the progression of Alzheimer's Disease, the stages and symptoms, dealing with caregiver burden, picking a nursing home, etc. Is the information contained solely in the web site or does the site also include links to other useful sites? Does the site offer books/videos/other materials for purchase *or for free*?
2. Identify the type of person(s) for whom the information would be most helpful: elder, caregiver/family members, or geriatric professional.
3. Rate the utility of the site for elders, caregivers/family members, *and* geriatric professionals. Rate the site based upon its navigatability, depth and scope, user-friendliness using the following rating scale. ★=poor, ★★=fair, ★★★=good, ★★★★★=excellent.

The group will be responsible for developing a web bibliography and rating scores for their topic, disseminating this information to the other groups and giving a *brief* (10-15 minute) presentation highlighting of their findings.

4. **Final** - Personal definition and example of successful aging due last day of class. Include the following points. This paper is to be 3 double spaced pages.
- a. Describe your view of "successful" aging. Give reasons supporting this view.
 - b. Describe someone you know who is "successfully aging" - demonstrate how this person meets the criteria you have outlined above.

- c. Outline a brief plan of how you will enhance your potential for successful aging.

Grading System

Assessment Paper - 30%
Presentation - 30%
Web Links Research - 25%
Final – 15%

CLASSES AND READINGS

CLASS #1 Introduction to course.
Jan. 14

CLASS #2 Current Demographics of the aging population; Defining aging and old age
Jan. 21
Readings: Hooyman & Kiyak - Chapter 1: The growth of social gerontology & Chapter 2: Historical and Cross-Cultural Issues in Aging
Rowe & Kahn - Successful Aging
Margaret Cruikshank - pp. 1-7

CLASS #3 Social and Psychological Contexts of Aging
Jan. 28
Readings: Hooyman & Kiyak - Chapter 5: Cognitive changes with aging, Chapter 6: Personality and mental health in old age (pp. 157-172), Chapter 13: The resiliency of elders of color
Zarit & Zarit - Chapter 2 “Normal Processes of Aging”

CLASS #4 Psychological Contexts continued; Biological and Physiological Context of Aging
Feb 4
Readings: Hooyman & Kiyak - Chapter 3: The social consequences of physical aging & Chapter 4: Managing chronic diseases and promoting well-being in old age
Guest Speaker: Dr. Sandra McGuire, Professor, School of Nursing

CLASS #5 Psychosocial Issues of Chronic Illness; Dementias - overview and assessment
Feb. 11
Readings: Zarit & Zarit - Chapter 3 “Disorder of Aging: Dementia, Delirium, and other Cognitive Problems”.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Vaughn De Coster, Asst. Professor, College of Social Work

CLASS #6 Assessment - overview of geriatric assessment; framework, concepts, tools
Feb. 18
Readings: Tice & Perkins - “Conducting a Strengths Assessment”
Zarit & Zarit - Chapter 5 “Clinical Assessment”

****Web-Links Research Reports****

CLASS #7 Mental Health Disorders in later Life
Feb. 25 **Readings:** Zarit & Zarit - Chapter 4 "Functional Disorders in Later Life".
Guest Speaker: Amy Johnson, MSW/ Rob Hendon LCSW (Centerstone CMHC)

CLASS #8 Late-Life Families and Caregiving
March 4 **Readings:** Hooyman & Kiyak - Chapter 9: The importance of social supports: family, friends, and neighbors & Chapter 14: The resiliency of older women
Seabold - "Surviving a Partner's Death Deeply in the Closet"
Zarit & Zarit - pp. 296-319 "Mental Disorders in Later Life: Caregiving"

****Assessment Papers Due****

CLASS #9 Ethics in Social Work with elders
March 11 **Readings:** Moody - Should Older People be Protected from Bad Choices?
Moody - "The cost of autonomy: The price of paternalism"
Zarit & Zarit - "Mental Disorders in Later Life: End of Life Issues"

March 18 **Spring Break**

CLASS #10 Dying, Death and Bereavement - stages of death & dying; bereavement process
March 25 **Readings:** Hooyman & Kiyak - chapter 12: Death, dying, bereavement, and widowhood
Zilberfein - "Coping with Death: Anticipatory grief and bereavement"
Parkes - "Bereavement as a psychosocial transition"
Guest Speaker: Ann Gwin, LCSW

CLASS #11 Societal context - types and history of old age policy; Should there be age-based policies? Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid
April 1

Readings: Hooyman & Kiyak - chapter 15: Social policies to address social problems & 16
Hudson - Generations
Binstock - Gerontologist

CLASS #12 Advance Directives and other legal issues related to late-life families
April 8 **Readings:** Freedman - Social Work in Health Care
Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare [DPOHA] form
Living Will form
Advanced Directives Description

*** Student Presentation***

CLASS #13 Service Settings - Hospital, Partial Programs, Out-Patient, Community-Based
April 15

Readings: Kropf - Home Health and Community Services
Cummings & Jackson - Hospital Discharge Planning

Guest Speakers: Mary Harkelroad, Karen Potratz, Bethany Staggs

Student Presentation

CLASS #14 Treatment Approaches and Special Issues in Later Life

April 22

Student Presentations

CLASS #15 Successful Aging; Wrap-Up and Evaluations

April 29

Final Exam

Guidelines for Presentations

Special Topics Presentations

For this assignment you will work with other students to explore a salient issue related to older adults and/or their families. You should review the most current literature concerning the dynamics of this issue and “best practices” for dealing with this issue/challenge. Your presentation should include:

1. *Statement of Problem* - Justify why this topic is important; what is its scope and prevalence; what is its impact on elders and society?
2. *Review of Literature* - Summarize relevant theoretical **and** empirical literature. What are the major themes or concepts that emerge in the literature concerning the nature of this issue?
 - a. What impact do diversity issues (e.g. gender, race, sexual orientation, age, etc.) have on elders’ experience of the issue being discussed. Examples - does sexual orientation impact the nature of an elder’s experience with HIV/aids and the challenges faced? Do male and female grandparents or grandmothers from different ethnic/racial backgrounds encounter different experiences when caring for their grandchildren? Do they face different challenges or have different supports? Is there any difference in alcoholism among the young-old and the older-old or among older males and females?
3. What does the literature say about the most effective strategies for addressing this problem/assisting this population.
 - a. Do the diversity issues identified above have any impact on treatment approaches or treatment efficacy? If so, how?
4. *Example* - Use some type of case study to illustrate your topic. You could videotape an interview with an elder/family member who is dealing with this issue or a social worker who is working with such clients. You could present the case as a live or video taped roleplay. Whatever way you choose should exemplify the major themes your group has raised in an interesting and engaging manner.
5. A typed APA style reference list is required. Provide full citations for any and all resources you utilized in your review of the literature and presentation planning so that students who wish to further explore this topic will know where to begin.

Please Note:

1. The hand-out for the instructor should include a page with **all the group members names** and the **part(s)** of the presentation for which each group member was **responsible**.
2. Groups are to turn in a one page description of their presentation 2 weeks before the actual presentation. The description should include information about the topic or intervention, about the method that will be used to convey this information (e.g. video, roleplay, class exercise) and what type of visual aides will be used to highlight key points (e.g. power point, overheads, posters). This description could either be handed in or e-mailed to the instructor and should be no more than 1 page.
3. Part of the grade for the presentation will be based on creativity. The presentation should be lively and designed to hold the audience’s attention. Reading from notes is **strongly discouraged and will result in a lower grade**.