

# GERONTOLOGY

*College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies*

## Program Description

The Gerontology Program provides an applied interdisciplinary approach to studying the human aging process and the challenges encountered by older adults and their families as they interact in contemporary society. The curriculum is anchored in life course and humanistic theory, and concentrates on the needs of both healthy and chronically ill elders.

In order to better understand life's complexities, the program guides students to critically examine and explore the issues, impacts, and interventions for elders and their families from an interdisciplinary framework. Throughout coursework, students are exposed to the bio-psycho-social-cultural and gender contexts that exist individually and in aggregate groups within society. Course content challenges all students to identify and analyze existing generalizations, theories, and concepts about aging in order to develop valid understandings based on current research in the discipline. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to actively advocate concerning elder issues.

The program offers a major and minor in Gerontology. Students are encouraged to blend other disciplines of study with Gerontology in order to facilitate varied career alternatives. They are helped in constructing an individual (elective) program of study within their major that reflects their own interests. Using elective courses to begin to build a minor in this area is highly encouraged. The program also assists students in constructing a special master's degree.

Career opportunities for gerontologists are growing rapidly. Employers are realizing the benefits of employing people who have backgrounds in aging along with abilities to address the needs of their older consumers. Gerontology graduates enter careers in both the public and private sectors with healthy and chronically ill elders. The careers are as varied as the goals of the individual and the needs of the organization. Graduates often work in such positions as counselors, advocates, analysts in state agencies for older adults, social workers, nurses, and information and referral specialists. Others have created their own careers in such areas as dental hygiene, human services, food services, travel, and Web design.

Gerontology graduates also often go on to graduate and professional schools in fields such as sociology, psychology, counseling, nursing, criminal justice, family services, and social work.

## Degree Programs

BS in Gerontology (<http://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/gerontology/bs-in-gerontology/>)

Minor in Gerontology (<http://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/gerontology/minor-in-gerontology/>)

Certificate in Gerontology (Graduate) (<http://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/gerontology/certificate-in-gerontology/>)

## Accreditation

In addition to California State University, Sacramento's full accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the Bachelor of

Science in Gerontology is also individually accredited by the Association of Gerontology in Higher Education.

## Notice to Students RE: Professional Licensure and Certification

California State University programs for professions that require licensure or certification are intended to prepare the student for California licensure and certification requirements. Admission into programs for professions that require licensure and certification does not guarantee that students will obtain a license or certificate. Licensure and certification requirements are set by agencies that are not controlled by or affiliated with the California State University and licensure and certification requirements can change at any time.

The California State University has not determined whether its programs meet other states' educational or professional requirements for licensure and certification. Students planning to pursue licensure or certification in other states are responsible for determining whether, if they complete a California State University program, they will meet their state's requirements for licensure or certification. This disclosure is made pursuant to 34 CFR §668.43(a)(5)(v)(C).

## Special Features

The focus of the curriculum is upon the biological/psychological/social aspects of aging; social policies; services and research in aging; and practice, administration, and program development, implementation and evaluation skills related to aging.

- An integrated interdisciplinary program of courses and field experiences leads to a Bachelor of Science degree with a Major or Minor in Gerontology.
- Multiple major courses include integrated Service Learning to connect theory, practice, and community service.
- Individuals are prepared for careers in varied gerontological practice areas based upon demographic projections of need for personnel in planning, administering, coordinating, and delivering older adult services.
- Gerontological practitioners' awareness of the effects of social policy on aging individuals and families is emphasized.
- The program helps facilitate students' progression from community colleges to the University when acquiring a BS degree in Gerontology.
- Individuals currently working in the community are afforded opportunities to learn advanced skills and acquire professional training in gerontology.
- The strong relationships between the Gerontology Program and Sacramento area agencies and institutions planning or delivering services for older persons, and their families are key components to this program's success.
- The Gerontology Program helps enhance the interest and commitment of diverse faculty and the University while providing a vehicle for collaboration regarding community engagement, interdisciplinary study and research in the field of Gerontology.
- The Program provides comprehensive academic preparation for graduate study in Gerontology or other related fields.

## Potential Career Possibilities

Counselor · Adult Protective Services · Assessment/Intake Case Worker · California Department of Aging · Case Manager · Consultant · Department of Health Services · Department of Social Services-Older Adult Educator · Guardian/Conservator Staff · Information and Referral Specialist · Legal Aid Assistant · Ombudsman/Advocate · Program Activities Director ·

Program Specialist · Senior Community Outreach · Geriatric Social Worker  
· Geriatric Clinical Nurse · Rehabilitation/Job Training Agencies · Senior  
Retirement/Adult Day Care Centers · Area Agencies on Aging

## Contact Information

Donna Jensen, Director  
Dixie Nolasco, Administrative Support Coordinator  
Amador Hall 550B  
(916) 278-7163,  
FAX: (916) 278-3855  
dnolasco@csus.edu  
www.csus.edu/gero (<http://www.csus.edu/gero/>)

ABAH, TERESA

JENSEN, DONNA

KOSS, CATHERYN

**GERO 21. First Year Seminar: Becoming an Educated Person. 3 Units**  
**General Education Area/Graduation Requirement:** Understanding  
Personal Development (E)  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Introduction to the nature and possible meanings of higher education,  
and the functions and resources of the University. Designed to help  
students develop and exercise fundamental academic success strategies  
and to improve their basic learning skills. Provide students with the  
opportunity to interact with fellow students and the seminar leader and to  
build a community of academic and personal support, as well as explore  
gerontological concepts needed to respond to demographic changes in  
today's world.

**GERO 100. Aging Issues in Contemporary America. 3 Units**  
**General Education Area/Graduation Requirement:** GE AREA D  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring, Summer

Introduction to the field of Gerontology and how the discipline addresses  
society's aging needs. An examination of current issues in gerontology  
using a life span perspective focusing on older adults' needs/concerns  
along life's continuum in various environments. Major topics include  
implications of the demographic imperative, common aging changes/  
conditions, myths and stereotypes, effects of health/illness on individual  
and family roles, basic social issues and policies arising from the graying  
of America, and media, cultural and gender influences.

**GERO 101. Older Adult Services and Strategies. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Exploration and analysis of the older adult service continuum within  
the context of changing diverse societal needs, service availability and  
accessibility, current public policy, and administrative and management  
issues facing care providers. A multidisciplinary examination of the  
spectrum of services and programs targeted for older adults and their  
families. Includes information and referral processes and agencies,  
recreational and social options, housing alternatives, in-home, residential  
and skilled care options, including health care eligibility criteria, funding  
sources, and adult protective services.

**GERO 102. Social Policy for an Aging Society. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Explores context and process for policy making by national and California  
state governments including ethical dimensions. Applications are  
developed from students' and instructor's areas of interest including K-12  
and higher education, land-use policy, and aging issues such as elder  
advocacy, Social Security, and Medicare/Medicaid. Provides background  
and skills for entry level positions in public or non-profit organizations.  
Cross Listed: PPA 100; only one may be counted for credit.

**GERO 103. Applied Care Management in Gerontological Practice. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Students will analyze issues, services, methods, and interventions related  
to practice for older adult care, their families, and caregivers. Outcomes  
include understanding the of unique characteristics/needs of older  
adults, systems approach to working with older adults, issues affecting  
service delivery (diversity, gender, ethics, special health, mental health  
needs), basic practice skills for effective service delivery to older adults  
and families/caregivers, attitudes and roles when working with older  
adults, and the business practices of geriatric care management.

**GERO 121. Strategies for Optimal Aging. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

This course is an in-depth, interdisciplinary, and holistic exploration of  
health promotion and adaptation paradigms that facilitate optimal and  
productive longevity. Hardiness and self-efficacy theories along with  
expectations and experiences enhancing quality of life are explored.  
Interactions among such variables as activity, diet, exercise, work/leisure,  
attitudes/beliefs, humor, living environments, spirituality, and social  
networks are investigated within the contexts of gender, economic, and  
cultural perspectives.  
Cross listed: GERO 221

**GERO 122. Interprofessional Approaches to Health Care in Older  
Adults. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Offers in-depth study/analysis of prevalent pathophysiological-based  
diseases and psychological disorders commonly experienced by  
older adults and frail elder populations. Disease/disorder causes and  
the effects of chronic illness on individuals, activities of daily living,  
sexuality, relationships, and coping abilities with changing lifestyles  
are examined using a life course framework and evidenced-based  
research. Assessment tools, lab value changes, medication needs,  
complications/disabilities, traditional/alternative treatments and ethical  
issues rising from meeting needs are investigated along with implications  
for caregivers. Paired Course: GERO 222

**GERO 123. Research on Aging & the Life Course. 3 Units**  
**General Education Area/Graduation Requirement:** Upper Division Further  
Studies in Area B5  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Analysis, evaluation, and application of existent gerontological research.  
Hands-on practice carrying out aging-related research projects,  
including defining the research question, selecting data collection  
tools, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and  
presenting results in narrative and visual formats. Special emphasis  
on connecting gerontological theory, research, and interdisciplinary  
practice, accommodating participants with sensory, physical, or cognitive  
limitations, and ethical issues.

- GERO 124. Perspectives on Death and Dying. 3 Units**  
**Prerequisite(s):** Student's academic level must be Junior of higher to enroll in this class.  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- Examination of the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with death and dying. Topics covered include children's and adult's concepts of dying and death; causes and types of death; self-destructive behavior; grief and mourning in the dying person and their survivors; physicians' aid in dying and other legal and ethical issues; and cross-cultural and historical perspectives on death.  
 Cross listed: PSYC 151
- GERO 125. Moving Toward Equity in California Aging Policy and Practice. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring, Summer
- This course examines California's state programs, services, and funding streams that support low-income older adults and persons with disabilities. It is focused on addressing equity, parity, funding and access. Students will be introduced to California's innovative Master Plan for Aging. Through studying past shortfalls and new approaches, this course will inform a new and diverse workforce in order to serve historically underserved communities, including BIPOC, Latinx, API, and LGBTQ+.
- GERO 130. Gerontology Practicum. 3 Units**  
**Prerequisite(s):** 24 Major units including GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103, GERO 121, GERO 122 and instructor permission.  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- Supervised practicum experience in a community agency planning for or delivering professional services to older adults. This practicum experience is part of two culminating courses for the major and focuses on application of the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline while affording students direct, hands on experiences. Includes a field seminar. Seminar discussions focus on the application of gerontological concepts derived from all gerontology courses and are applied to each student's specific practicum area.  
**Note:** This is a service learning course.
- Credit/No Credit
- GERO 131. Gerontology Capstone Practicum. 3 Units**  
**Prerequisite(s):** 36 Major units including GERO 101, GERO 102, GERO 103, GERO 121, GERO 122, GERO 130 and instructor permission.  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- Supervised internship experience in a community agency planning for or delivering professional services to older adults. This capstone practicum experience builds on the first internship course and is the final culminating course for the major and focuses on advanced application of the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline while affording students direct, hands on experiences. Includes a field seminar. Seminar discussions focus on the application of gerontologic concepts derived from all gerontology courses and are applied to each student's specific Practicum area.  
**Note:** This is a service learning course. Minors may take this course without taking GERO 130
- Credit/No Credit
- GERO 199. Special Problems. 1 - 3 Units**  
**Prerequisite(s):** Advanced approval of project goal and objectives by program director.  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- Independent research, project, or directed reading.  
**Note:** Open to students who are capable of independent work. A maximum of 3 units may count toward elective major requirements.
- Credit/No Credit
- GERO 200. Adaptation To Age Related Changes, Illnesses and Caregiving. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- Exposure to and analysis of positive and negative functional consequences arising from age related changes and illnesses in elders. Content elucidates changes and their effects on elders' levels of wellness using interdisciplinary research and holistic, life course frameworks. Screening assessments, interventions, community resources and services, and ethical issues are addressed for each topic. Caregiving issues and solutions are explored within life span and problem solving frameworks.
- GERO 221. Strategies for Optimal Aging. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- This course is an in-depth, interdisciplinary, and holistic exploration of health promotion and adaptation paradigms that facilitate optimal and productive longevity. Hardiness and self-efficacy theories along with expectations and experiences enhancing quality of life are explored. Interactions among such variables as activity, diet, exercise, work/leisure, attitudes/beliefs, humor, living environments, spirituality, and social networks are investigated within the contexts of gender, economic, and cultural perspectives.  
 Cross listed: GERO 121
- GERO 222. Interprofessional Approaches to Health Care in Older Adults. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring
- This course examines prevalent health issues commonly experienced by older adults. The course utilizes an interprofessional evidence-based approach to address the impact of chronic illness and related issues on older adults, their families, and caregivers. The focus of this course is on health promotion and includes holistic therapies and ethical issues that arise in late-life care.
- GERO 225. Moving Toward Equity in California Aging Policy & Practice. 3 Units**  
**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring, Summer
- This course examines California's programs, services, and funding streams that support low-income older adults and persons with disabilities. Students will be introduced to California's innovative Master Plan for Aging with its focus on equity, parity, and access. Using analytical, evaluative and leadership skills, students mentor GERO 125 students to address policy and program needs of vulnerable constituencies. This course will inform a new and diverse workforce prepared to engage underserved communities, including BIPOC, Latinx, API, and LGBTQ+.

**GERO 295. Internship/Project.**

**3 Units**

**Prerequisite(s):** GERO 200, GERO 221, GERO 222.

**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Supervised fieldwork internship or project that is a culminating experience and applies learned gerontological theories and concepts in a community setting where planning, developing, or delivering services to older adults or their families occurs. Students choose an area of practice and negotiate their learning experiences or project with their faculty advisor and field supervisor. Advanced approval of project goal and objectives by program director are required.

Credit/No Credit

**GERO 299. Special Problems.**

**1 - 3 Units**

**Prerequisite(s):** Instructor permission.

**Term Typically Offered:** Fall, Spring

Independent research, project, or directed reading. Open to students who are capable of independent work. A maximum of 3 units may count toward elective major requirements. Advanced approval of project goal and objectives by program director.

Credit/No Credit